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### THESIS – THÈSE

Title of Thesis – Titre de la thèse

Closure in Romantic Drama: ~~French, E~~
English, German, French

Degree for which thesis was presented
Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Ph.D.

Year this degree conferred
Année d'obtention de ce grade

1985

University – Université

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# CLOSURE IN ROMANTIC DRAMA:
# GERMAN, ENGLISH, FRENCH

BY

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ANNA M. WITTMANN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING, 1985

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# ABSTRACT

Our study focuses upon what is, in our view, a major turning-point in the history and theory of drama. It aims to establish, on the basis of a comprehensive examination of the theory and practice of the German, English, and French romantic drama, that a component of traditional dramatic structure and function is radically altered, and that the patterns of this departure from tradition are typologically similar in the three literatures. The implications of this shift in theory and practice confirm and reinforce the major importance of a persistently underestimated movement in the development of the modern drama.

Five basic types or categories of closure in the romantic drama are here proposed: the climactic, tableau, collage, circular, and ironic reversal. Either singly or in combination, these structures are present in the overwhelming majority of romantic dramas, and serve to differentiate closural practice among the Romantics sharply from that of preceding movements in the history of the serious drama.

From a methodological perspective, our approach is both historical and typological. A means of isolating, identifying, and examining the ending as a component part of the drama is adapted from Russian formalist motif theory. On the basis of previous attempts to define and delineate the ending, the necessity for a tighter and clearer concept of dramatic form and closural terminology is posited. An overview of major dramatic works from Antiquity to the late eighteenth century aims to establish the conventional norms that govern the dramatic ending. At the same time, the pendular motion of tradition and innovation sets up major links between baroque and romantic practice, and reveals in the German Sturm und Drang drama a significant precursor of the definitive changes in closural structure and function that are to evolve on an international scale in the Romantic Era.

An extensive examination of the obscure as well as the better-known dramas of the romantic generation points toward a considerable 'unity in multeity' in the structures and functions of closure. The drama no longer aims at creating an illusion of self-contained completeness and resumed order in its final moments. Conflict seldom resolves itself definitively; rather, the romantic drama tends to terminate on an upswing of action and emotion or a self-perpetuating continuation and repetition of situations that lead to no definitive 'outcome' or 'dénouement.'

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present study has been 'comparative' not only in subject but in personal input. It has reconfirmed to me one of the great assets of comparative studies, which lies in the exchange and sharing of ideas. The suggestions and observations of many people have left their imprint on this work, and it is, unfortunately, possible to mention merely a few. The greatest debt of gratitude is naturally due to my supervisor, Prof. Milan V. Dimić, with whom my discussions of Romanticism have always been intellectually stimulating. Special words of thanks are also due to Profs. Roger Bauer (München), W.D. Howarth (U. Bristol), Jose Lambert (Louvain), G. Gillespie (Stanford), G. Hoffmeister (USC, Santa Barbara), L. Doložel (Univ. Toronto) and, in particular, to A.J. Harding (Univ. of Sask.)who, in my undergraduate years, convinced me that Romanticism would be my future field of study. To my committee members, Profs. A. Scott-Prelorentzos, J. Terfloth, H. Kreisel and C.H. Moore, I am indebted for hours of discussion and invaluable suggestions. Not to be forgotten are many of my colleagues and friends, all of whom have patiently tolerated their subjection to 'beginning with endings.'

I should also like to acknowledge the generous financial support of the Izaak Walton Killam Foundation, the Alberta Heritage Scholarship (Steinhauer) Fund, and of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The final and warmest thanks go, however, to my parents, my sons, and the rest of my family, immediate and extended.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

> I begin by discussing fictions of the End--about ways in which, under varying existential pressures, we have imagined the ends of the world. This, I take it, will provide clues to the ways in which fictions, whose ends are consonant with origins, and in concord, however unexpected, with their precedents, satisfy our needs.[1]

The above statement from a work which provides imaginative and provocative insights into the concept of 'endings' in literary narrative represents a major approach to the study of closure. The problem of the ending is, in Kermode's view, an outgrowth of the problem of the 'mid-point.' Life begins in medias res, he argues, and its termination similarly occurs in mediis rebus.[2] The search for an ending, or rather, for some concept of a point of arrival, is thereby a reflection of the need 'to speak humanly of a life's importance' in relation to the world, 'a need in the moment of existence to belong, to be related to a beginning and to an end.'[3] By the same token, literature, according to Kermode, reflects this need, and employs fictions or myths to set the fictional narrative within a context beyond the merely temporal.

In his Sense of the Ending, Kermode traces the transitions within the 'fictional paradigms' of the ending, which are at first based upon apocalyptic thought but, in modern times, characterized by the absence of a 'long perspective.'[4] The first stage, he maintains, is that of 'the six days world,' a conversion of the Biblical myth of Genesis into the concept of 'an ordered series of events which ends . . .

in a final Sabbath.'[5] In this rectilinear, non-cyclical view of time, events are placed within a unitary system. Its extension is the Apocalypse, which, taken literally or figuratively, 'depends on a concord of imaginatively recorded past and imaginatively predicted future;'[6] in other words, the transitory is viewed within the context of an 'end,' and the end itself, as the point of entry to regeneration and continuity.

Concord, integral to the Apocalyptic vision, collapses when the relationship between the time of fiction and the time of the world becomes tenuous, according to Kermode. He argues that the decisive factor in this collapse is not the Copernican revolution, but rather, the lengthening of the scale of history. With the development of the natural sciences, the world view becomes increasingly temporal, and the vision of a distinct beginning and a distinct end correspondingly recedes.

The fictions of closure, Kermode's study emphasises, emerge upon a historical background; simultaneously, they sketch patterns of recurrence, extension, modification, and even of partial or full-scale flight into the traditions of the past. In this way, they form, it may be deduced, part of the pendular movement of literary tradition and innovation.

The place of Romanticism within the historical progression of 'fictions of the end' remains vague in The Sense of an Ending. The basic transition for Kermode is somewhat ahistorically made to concur with 'the protraction of time' marking the movement 'from a literature which assumes that it was imitating an order to a literature which assumes that it has to create an order, unique and self-dependent, and possibly attainable only after a critical process that might be called "decreation".'[7] Obliquely, however, the Romantic Movement plays a role in his delineation. Wordsworth, he notes, presents us with a 'dimensionless, limitless world, resistant to paradigmatic mimesis, requiring the decreation of old forms and old ways of speaking, operating in a temporal mode. He sounds one of the characteristic notes of modern literature, and begins to make the quasi-spatial mode as inappropriate to literature as it was becoming to the sciences.'[8] In Wordsworth's determination, therefore, to counteract the individual's sense of estrangement by means of the enduring influence of nature or the recollection of 'spots in time' lies the attempt to transform the temporal into the atemporal. Kermode does not mention, nevertheless, that such a solution is in itself temporal, for it is contingent upon what Coleridge wisely identifies as the 'fountains . . . within.'

Indirectly, isolated members of the English Romantic Age emerge in Kermode's study as representatives of the great 'turning-point' from the end-directed to the temporally-bound world view; the paucity of examples, however, precludes the extension of the argument to embrace the movement from a comparative perspective. Elsewhere in the study, the boundary of the transition is shifted to the mid-nineteenth century.[9] In yet another aspect, the vaguely general contours of the examination may be questioned, and tend to limit the fruitful application of Kermode's contentions to the study of closure. The relationship between the writer's chronological sense and its application in the structures and functions of the ending is not thoroughly convincing. Rather, other factors, which tend to move the revolution in the sense of the ending from the latter half of the nineteenth century, with its breakthrough in evolutionary theory, backward in time, to the final decades of the eighteenth century and the beginnings of the Romantic Movement. As early as 1781, Immanuel Kant already poses the following antimony:

> Die Welt hat einen Anfang in der Zeit und ist dem Raume nach begrenzt. . . . Die Welt hat keinen Anfang und keine Grenzen im Raume, sondern ist, zeitlich wie räumlich, unendlich.[10]

The Lisbon earthquake, the Seven Years' War, and the American and French Revolutions together set the tone for the nineteenth century, which is to see the meteoric rise and fall of the Napoleonic empire, continued waves of revolution followed by absolutist repression, a passionate upsurge of nationalist awareness, and an accelerated exposure to other cultures, languages and peoples. With the structures of the safe, known, controlled and controllable rapidly crumbling, the European mind is sent scurrying in all directions to seek the lost sense of permanence in nature, in the infinite creative and visionary power of the imagination, in love, in a freely-interpreted past and a millennial future. Behind every apparent solution, however, there lurks an obverse of threat, terror, destruction, disillusion, or sterility. Well before the scientific lengthening of the scale of history, therefore, social conditions, historical events, philosophy and the arts have already undone the sense of human life as an orderly progression from a beginning to a distinct ending, followed by regeneration. Literature both reflects and announces this change.

A recent work on a theme similar to that of Kermode emphasizes the confluence of social, political, and eschatological factors in the Romantic Era, which represents, according to Paul van Tieghem, 'l'un des deux principaux événements de la vie intellectuelle de l'Europe,' the other being the Renaissance.[11] W. Warren Wagar's Terminal Visions, a study of 'endtime' in literature, claims that a central message evolves from the proliferation of 'last man' stories in Romanticism:

> Their connection with private tragedy is clear, and of course they are only a variation on the familiar romantic themes of nostalgia from ruins and times past, the isolation of the self, and longing for a truth above mere utility or pleasure. But all these themes reflect the common experience of the romantic generation. It was a generation of unnerving revolution in politics and society, following hard on a century of steadily deepening skepticism about the underlying structures of Western faith.[12]

In more antagonistic terms, the cultural historian Arnold Hauser comes to a similar conclusion. Whether the Romantic attempts to escape into the past or future, he states, is finally of no consequence: 'The essential thing is his fear of the present and of the end of the world.'[13]

Our study will argue, therefore, that the decisive revolution in 'the sense of the ending' gathers force in the final decades of the eighteenth century and achieves its full and most characteristic forms of expression with Romanticism. Two interrelated factors underlying this change, however, require consideration. The concept of cyclical recurrence or 'ewige Wiederkehr' represents, of course, a prominent motif in myth and folklore.[14] As Peter Pütz points out in his study of dramatic structure, this pattern is also incorporated in the drama:

> Als allgemeines Bau-Prinzip wirkt sie in der Duplizität von Vorgriff und Verwirklichung, in der vorausdeutenden Spiegelung und in der rückgreifenden Parallelfabel.[15]

The idea of cyclical recurrence is central to the upheaval of ontological thought accomplished in the Romantic era. The historicism of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century is characterized by a tendency to view the past in the light of the present, that is, to practise upon the antithesis of past and present events a type of 'synthesis.' This dialectical process, which thus relativises the present by means of the past, and concurrently models the future upon an idealized vision of past glory, results in no 'straightforward continuum,' as Hauser points out:

> The idea that we and our culture are involved in eternal flux and ceaseless struggle, the notion that our intellectual life is a process with a merely transitory character, is a discovery of romanticism and represents its most important contribution to the philosophy of the present age.[16]

In this way, the 'sense of the ending' in the period of our study is indeed complex, linked as it is with two factors that cannot wholly be reconciled. The emergence of dialectical thought, which allows for no definitive end to the spiralling but forward-directed movement of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, is tempered by a cyclical view of history, wherein the point of arrival is made to coincide with the point of departure.

Intriguing as the history of fictions of the ending may be, leading as they may to insights on the ethos of a culture, the present study of the structures and functions of the ending in European romantic drama employs a method opposite to that of Kermode. Rather than beginning with the 'fictional paradigms' that humanity builds up in the face of the incipient lapse from time as it is understood in the context of the present, and tracing their modification and change throughout cultural history, our study focuses on the ending as a structural component of the drama. This serves in turn as a stepping-stone to a larger concept of the dynamics of literary tradition and innovation, and as an indicator of the aesthetics and ethos of a literary movement. Ideally, a comparative study of the 'romantic sense of the ending' will throw light upon the Protean complexity of an age which continues to challenge and perplex the literary and cultural historian. The major aim of our project, however, is confined to the so-called 'serious' romantic drama in the context of cross-historical and cross-cultural dramatic developments. Our assertion is that, in the structure and function of closure, the European Romantics accomplished a major redirection of literary conventions, which indicates equally a major redirection of dramatic theory and practice. Viewed as a central turning-point in the history of drama, this contention has yet to be established and documented.

The romantic drama has, to this day, suffered a neglect which stems from negative value judgements. Recurrently the theme of the failed, the still-born, and the tedious dramatic attempts of the romantic generation appears in literary history and criticism. A recent study of German Romanticism, for instance, dismisses the drama of the period as 'dismal.'[17] Somewhat more generously, Allardyce Nicoll's World Drama from Aeschylus to Anouilh comments on the 'noble, but generally fruitless efforts' of the generation to 'produce tragic works of majesty and distinction . . . pursued by poets out of harmony with the stage of their time.'[18] Robertson Davies' assessment of the English romantic drama, that 'the tie between the theatre and literature, which we have seen wearing thinner during the fifty years already considered, dwindled to a thread as the influence of romanticism grew,'[19] similarly repeats a tune well known in the annals of dramatic history. Although this real or assumed division between literary drama and stage was less marked in France, where leading Romantics accomplished, at least for a number of years, a veritable coup de théâtre, the forms and content of the new drama were never fully accepted and soon fully out of favour. The theatre had been too briefly and too superficially gained, as Théophile Gautier wistfully articulates in L'Histoire du romantisme (pr. 1874): 'On éprouve une surprise indicible que les générations actuelles . . . ne comprendront tout à fait.'[20] Comparative studies of the romantic drama continue to be few, and to this point have accomplished no extensive interlinguistic overview of the European and North American genres, neither as a homogeneous-heterogeneous group, no in the more general context of dramatic theory and practice.

The present study aims, therefore, to isolate one aspect of the romantic drama, the structure and function of closure, to propose and establish the contention that major changes in the larger context of dramatic theory and practice were thereby accomplished, and to assess the relevance of the established closural characteristics as a possible distinguishing factor of the romantic drama. To aid in the identification and comparison of similar structures and functions in closure, our study proposes five categories, derived from an extensive textual examination, in a move to establish an interlinguistic typology. Although the weight of emphasis has, because of the immense proliferation and mixing of genres from the eighteenth century onward, been forced to fall on the 'serious' drama, as opposed to the predominantly comic, instances of the latter are discussed when their closural features are of special relevance.

Problems are inherent in the comparative study of a highly experimental, heterogeneous movement. That preoccupations and emphases vary from one national literature to another is only to be expected; while the reading dramas of the German Romantics, in particular, tend to be massive in length and episodic in form, the French frequently write with a far greater awareness of the theatre. Among the English, the split between the 'closet' drama and the stage performance becomes increasingly marked as the Romantic Movement progresses. In all three major literatures of our study, however, the typological links between 'literary' and 'popular' or melodramatic forms create a thin or even indistinguishable line of demarcation. The oblivion, moreover, into which much of the dramatic output of the era has fallen renders a number of texts rare or unavailable.

Nevertheless, the hope and conviction that some unity in multeity will be demonstrated, and that our findings will aid in drawing attention both to the originality of romantic experimentation with the drama and to the dense network of affinities and contrasts that characterises the entire movement more than counterbalance the inherent difficulties. The sense of fascination and challenge arising from the resources of a widely comparative study must, of course, be accompanied by a lively degree of skepticism. To reapply the aphorism of Friedrich Schlegel, the study of romantic drama is 'noch im Werden,' and, in the same way that our representative texts often reveal a sense of dynamic incompletion in their modes of closure, so the present study aims at provoking further discussion.

At least three aspects of literary closure demand the attention of a researcher embarking on a project of the present nature. First, the subject necessarily deals with both content and structure. These, in turn, cannot be isolated from their metonymous relationship with the form and content of the work under examination, and, by extension, from the literary and extra-textual context which forms the topography of a comparative study. While our project is primarily text-centred, the second factor, that of the interlinkage of closure with the text as an entity, with the ethos of an age and a literary movement, and finally, with the synchronic-diachronic position of the text in a historical and typological literary tradition, leads beyond the mere examination of a component structure in a literary work. At this stage, more or less as a point of arrival, 'the sense(s) of the ending' in romantic drama emerges. In this way, the deductive method here adopted differs from the largely inductive approach of Kermode.

The first two aspects--the dialogue of structure and content, which endows to the ending its function, and the significance of closure within the dynamics of the individual work and within the literary and extra-literary systems--lead to yet another. A closural study, to go beyond mere random observations, necessitates a clear but flexible method of identifying the structures under discussion, and of linking them with the core text and the larger dramatic context. Since our methods of approaching closural structure form the subject of a forthcoming chapter, it will suffice now to argue that the definition of the 'ending' of a text calls for a delineation more precise than that of the final scene of a drama (particularly where scenic division is, as in Brentano's Die Gründung Prags [1815], abandoned), the final lines of a poem, the last paragraph of a short story, or the last chapter of a novel. This we have attempted to do in two ways: first, in a drama with causal-temporal linkage, by the identification of the active and bound motifs leading to a final situation; and, in an episodically-structured work, according to thematic development.

Two reasons have led to the organization of romantic texts along historical and linguistic lines. While the forwarding of a typology of closure may seem to suggest typological subdivision, such an organization has only the advantage of a certain homogeneity. Even with the shared characteristics demonstrated by a textual study, classification does not form a Procrustean bed. Not only does structure conduct, metaphorically speaking, a dialogue with content, but also, variations are perceptible within a given category. That these developments in content and structure should be eloquently related with literary-historical and extra-textual factors is only to be expected; in turn, once the network of variables and constants has been traced within the historical boundaries of one linguistic group, the interrelationships and divergences within Romanticism as an international movement can be the more meaningfully posited.

In the above way, some of the pitfalls of closural study have, it is hoped, been avoided. Our method differs in several fundamental aspects from those of two other relatively recent studies. A general view of dramatic closure, unrestricted to the work of a single playwright or a modest number of texts, has to our knowledge only been attempted by Walter Hinck in his analysis of comic closure; little emphasis is placed upon the identification of structural norms and variants, and the work, although of considerable interest, is disappointingly brief.[21] Another study, Barbara Herrnstein-Smith's Poetic Closure, begins by advancing the valid point that the closural conventions of a given period 'do not quite disappear, but they do fall back from prominence into the common sea of poetic devices,' and that 'the changing fashions in poetic closure are obviously related to more general developments in literary history.'[22] At the same time, an indifference to the historically-based patterns of innovation, recurrence and disappearance appears to be founded on the belief that merely the 'styles' or fashions of closure change:

> Devices of closure are neither more nor less resistant to historical change than any other poetic device, from meter to metaphor. It would be possible, I suppose, to make a historical study of closure . . . .. I would point out, however, that all these poetic devices are effective by virtue of our psychological construction and particularly our responses to language; and these, in turn, apparently remain constant under extremely diverse circumstances, historical and other.[23]

A problem of terminology and method seems to be inherent: is closure merely a 'device,' devoid of meaning, and, if this is true, in what way can the presence of 'psychologically effective' closure be established? By extension, Herrnstein-Smith's endeavour to 'assume a universal psychology of closure' leads her to a statement that 'the same general principles of closure are found in the poetry of all European languages,'[24] while at the same time she asserts that no examples to justify her generalization need be proffered. A more fruitful approach for the purposes of comparative study would, it appears, lie in the matters of how, when, and why certain typologies of closure emerge, in determining the relationships between structure and content, and the significance of shifts in the literary tradition.

A similar problem of definition and method results when, in another study, closure is identified as 'the process by which a novel reaches an adequate and appropriate conclusion.'[25] The 'ending,' on the other hand, is viewed as 'the last definable unit of work--section, scene, chapter, page, paragraph, sentence--whichever seems most appropriate for a given text.'[26] Both statements raise more problems than they solve. That absolute standards of what is 'adequate' or 'appropriate' are posited implies a certain immobility of the work and of the structures and functions of closure, isolated from intertextuality, historical context, and ethos. To maintain, moreover, that the final subdivision of a work, whether it is a section imposed by an editor, or a page imposed by the size of a printer's type, constitutes the ending, so long as it appears 'appropriate,' reduces structure and content to a matter of whimsical choice.

It is hoped, therefore, that our study of closure in the romantic drama will profit from the insights and the shortcomings of previous closural examinations. In an inversion of romantic dialectics, the forthcoming chapters will first offer an 'antithesis' by means of an illustrative comparison and contrast of the endings of Shakespeare's

Othello and Vigny's adaptation, Le More de Venise. From this preliminary example of the romantic departure from the conventions of closure, the study moves to more general questions: first, a necessary clarification of terminology and methodology will be sought, and next, an abbreviated outline of the literary-historical manifestations of closure undertaken. A central turning-point in the orientations of the ending is pre-figured by later eighteenth-century tendencies; this period therefore merits a separate chapter. The ensuing overview of romantic theory with bearings upon closure aims to determine whether a 'poetics of closure' may indeed be deduced.

The final and most extensive section of our study consists of a chronologically-based survey of dramatic closure in German, English and French Romanticism respectively, followed by a necessarily brief attempt to illustrate the further development of romantic innovations in the remainder of the nineteenth century. The concluding assessment will aim at a synthesis of the structural-functional parallels which emerge on an interlinguistic scale.

The results of our study will, it is hoped, extend and reaffirm the intensely heterogeneous but concurrently homogeneous manifestations of a European-wide phenomenon. In the context of dramatic history before and after the Romantic Movement, a more prominent position will be sought for a frequently overlooked body of dramas in the development of dramatic tradition and innovation.

The drama of the Romantics, as the forthcoming study aims to confirm, poses many of its major questions in the ending. By the same token, a question serves here as a point of departure. In Hölderlin's unfinished drama Empedokles, the protagonist's disciple Pausanias asks, 'Wie wird das endigen?'[27] Appropriately, no definitive answer emerges.

## Notes

[1] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending. Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 5.

[2] Kermode, p. 7.

[3] Kermode, p. 4.

[4] Kermode, p. 179.

[5] Kermode, p. 5.

[6] Kermode, p. 8.

[7] Kermode, p. 167.

[8] Kermode, p. 168.

[9] Kermode, p. 8.

[10] Immanuel Kant, *Die drei Kritiken in ihrem Zusammenhang mit dem Gesamtwerk*, ed. Raymund Schmidt, Kroners Taschenausgabe, 104 (Stuttgart: Kroner, 1960), pp. 163, 164.

[11] Paul van Tieghem, *L'Ère romantique. Le Romantisme dans la littérature européenne* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1948), p. 1.

[12] W. Warren Wagar, *Terminal Visions. The Literature of Last Things* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1982), p. 11.

[13] Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, trans. by author and Stanley Goodman (New York: Vintage, 1957), III, p. 165.

[14] See, for instance, Max Lüthi, *Das Volksmärchen als Dichtung: Ästhetik und Anthropologie*, Studien zur Volkserzählung, 1 (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1975), especially 'Wiederholung und Variation,' pp. 91-101.

[15] Peter Pütz, Die Zeit im Drama. Zur Technik dramatischer Spannung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), p. 218.

[16] Hauser, III, p. 169.

[17] R. Tegai Hughes, Romantic German Literature (London: Edwin Arnold, 1979), p. vii.

[18] Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama from Aeschylus to Anouilh, rev. ed. (London: Harrap, 1976), p. 364.

[19] Michael Booth, Richard Southern, Frederick and Lise Lone Marker, Robertson Davies, The Revels History of Drama in English (London: Methuen, 1975), p. 193.

[20] Theophile Gautier, L'Histoire du romantisme (Paris: Charpentier, 1874), p. 111.

[21] Walter Hinck, Vom Ausgang der Komödie: Exemplarische Lustspielschlüsse in der europäischen Literatur (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977).

[22] Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 31.

[23] Herrnstein-Smith, p. 32.

[24] Herrnstein-Smith, p. 32.

[25] Marianna Torgovnick, Closure in the Novel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 6.

[26] Torgovnick, p. 11.

[27] Friedrich Hölderlin, Der Tod des Empedokles (first version) in Vol. 4, pt. 1 of his Sämtliche Werke, ed. Friedrich Beißner, Stuttgarter Hölderlin Ausgabe (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961), p. 56, Act II.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 'Traditional' and 'Romantic' Closure:

## Shakespeare's *Othello* and Vigny's *Le More de Venise*

In 1829, a year before the French romantic drama reached its most polemical heights with the *Bataille d'Hernani*, Alfred de Vigny wrote the following comment on the ending of his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*:

> J'ai recomposé et resserré ce dénouement tout entier depuis la scène III; il m'a fallu rassembler des traits épars, en ajouter quelques-uns et retrancher de trop lentes explications, parce que c'est aujourd'hui, pour la France surtout, une nécessité que la dernière émotion soit la plus vive et la plus profonde. J'ai tâché seulement de ne perdre aucun des grands traits de Shakespeare.[1]

To the modern reader, unaccustomed to the frenzied and exclamatory tone of much romantic drama, Vigny's desire to render the 'grands traits' of the original may appear presumptuous. Nevertheless, his adaptation is significant, in that it voices in theory and demonstrates in practice a romantic departure from the traditional structures and functions of the dramatic ending. One change is already indicated in the footnote to the beginning of the third scene of the final act: 'Il était important de montrer, par ce grand exemple de Shakespeare, que tout n'est pas fini après la mort de l'*héroïne*, et que le dénouement d'une tragédie peut être l'accomplissement d'un caractère et d'une haute vue morale, et non la fin d'une petite aventure' (V, I, p. 478). Here Vigny suggests that the nucleus of tragedy lies not so much in the structure of the action as in character and ethos. The ending, he intimates, is crucial, for it embodies the final facets of character development and the philosophical outlook of the play. More than a mere verbal tag which 'unties' the complications of the plot, it represents an upward movement in significance and intensity. No slowdown or cessation of action is necessarily indicated. The climax, with the death of the heroine, does not result in a falling action, for, as suggested above, the use of 'traits épars' and swift explications cause a dynamic pace to be maintained until the very end.

The gap between theory and practice is demonstrated by Vigny's somewhat feeble and sensationalized ending. This does not, however, remove the significance of his attempt. The luxuriance of Shakespearean diction and metaphor is converted into sparse, clipped dialogue. A swift exchange of question and answer, point and counterpoint condenses and speeds the ending:

> Emilia. Vous la calomniez!
> Othello. Non! Perfide et légère
> Comme l'onde.
> Emilia. Elle était un ange de candeur!
> Othello. Une femme perdue.
> Emilia. Un trésor de pudeur!
> Othello. Ton mari me l'a dit.
> Emilia. Il a dit cela d'elle?
> Mon mari?
> Othello. Ton mari.
> Emilia. Qu'elle était infidèle?
> (V, I [V, iii],
> p. 473)

The major change from the Shakespearean source, however, occurs in the final lines of the drama. Vigny's Le More de Venise ends both abruptly and explosively with a dynamic motif as Othello, overcome by grief and remorse, surreptitiously seizes a dagger he has concealed and, in a final surprise action, stabs himself.[2]

> *Il cherche à tirer son poignard sans être vu.*
> Parlez ainsi de moi; puis racontez encor
> Que dans Alep un jour, dérobant un trésor,
> Un Turc au turban vert profanait une église,
> Insultait un chrétien; le More de Venise
> L'arrêta; vainement il demanda merci,
> Il le prit à la gorge en le frappant ainsi.
> *Il se poignarde et tombe à la renverse.*
> (V, I [V, iv], p. 478)

Although no stage directions are given at this point, one can envisage the rapid falling of the curtain, leaving a startled group of onlookers on the stage and, by extension, in the audience.

By way of contrast, the Shakespearean ending, although in *Othello* less lengthy than, for instance, in *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, or *Hamlet*, gradually loosens the reins of tension, and creates the picture of a society saddened yet unshattered by the recent tragedy. The final words of the play are those of Lodovico, who, as a minor yet socially prominent figure, represents the forces of family, government, and the prevailing social order.[3] With calm authority, he deals one by one with the issues which still remain unresolved: the punishment of the villain; the disposal of the bodies; the inheritance of Othello's property and succession to his responsibilities; and the relaying of the recent events to the state.[4] Although regret is not absent, Shakespeare's ending has several functions: first, that of eulogizing and honouring the dead hero and, indirectly, absolving his guilt; indicating that justice is dispensed; outlining the new power structure in the state; and reaffirming that the forces of continuity and harmony are once more active in society. With minor changes of emphasis, this pattern repeats itself throughout

Shakespeare's tragedies.

On three levels, therefore, those of content, structure, and function, Shakespeare's ending differs from that of Vigny. On the first level, while both endings centre around discovery, explication, atonement and retribution, the second motif--explication--plays a far greater role in the Elizabethan drama than in the French romantic one. The peak action--the murder of Desdemona--leads in both plays to the shocked recriminations of subsidiary characters as the deed is discovered. This is followed by a gradual clarification of facts previously hidden from the hero. In spite of Othello's frenzied state of mind in Shakespeare's tragedy, explication unfolds in basically clear, logical stages. Both the recounting of the ruse of the handkerchief and mention of details such as the conspiratorial letter found upon Rodrigo accomplish a precise revelation of truths up to this point concealed from the hero. Significantly, Vigny concerns himself neither with the letter nor, indeed, with the entire aftermath of Rodrigo's attack on Cassio. Without explication, the wounded Cassio enters and grants pardon to the contrite Othello (p. 477). What Shakespeare's ending gains in clarity and completeness through detailed explication, that of Vigny gains in speed by merely sketching the outlines of Iago's ruse in swift strokes. Further differences of content, those of the French writer characteristic of romantic diction and imagery, bear special consequences in the ending. As already observed, the stately elegance of Shakespearean diction gives way to simple, conversational language, frequently marked by a swift play of question, answer, and exclamation. The somewhat precious imagery of the original gives way to fragmentary, somewhat blurred images. One series of metaphors, in particular, illustrates this contrast. Although the later text obviously borrows from the earlier, the concreteness of Shakespearean imagery imparts a tone of composure and relative detachment:

then you must speak . . .
. . .
. . . of one whose hand
(Like the base Indian) threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdu'd eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their med'cinable gum. Set you down this;
And say besides that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduc'd the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him--thus. (V, ii, p. 1284)

In the above lines, Othello's grief is largely internalized as both crime and punishment are set chiefly in the context of the state. Apart from the outburst of self-hatred in the self-immolation described in the final four lines, his monologue reflects objectivity, a tone reinforced by the use of antithesis and parallel sentence structures, as well as by the detailed imagery: as, for instance, in the reference to the Indian sources of the allusion; by the comparison of tears to the secretions of Arabian trees; the suggestion that tears may be, like the gum, 'med'cinable;' and reference to the Islamic practice of circumcision.

In the corresponding passage, Vigny focuses hyperbolically on pathos and sentiment and dispenses with the balanced Latinate sentence structure of the original. Declamation prevails:

. . . [racontez comment]
Dans un piège infernal lentement enlacée,
Jusqu'à l'assassinat mon âme fut poussée.
Racontez qu'un soldat qui ne pleura jamais
Vous a montré des yeux vaincus, et, désormais,

> Versant des larmes, plus que les palmiers d'Asie
> De leurs flancs parfumés ne versent d'ambroisie.
> (V, I [V, iv], p. 478)

In both the original drama and the adaptation, a double personification represents the two opposing forces, the criminal and the lawful or avenging, in Othello's nature by means of a 'Turk' and a 'Moor.' Significantly, however, the Turk's crime in Vigny's version is not that of 'traducing the state,' but rather, that of profaning sacred objects. This image further removes the emphasis from the state and recasts it in a context of vague religiosity and a medievalistic sanctification of the female.

The chief difference, however, lies in the structure of the two endings. Shakespeare's outcome may be divided into two parts, the 'sequel,' which traces the direct consequences of Desdemona's murder, and the 'commentary,' which sums up past events and traces a new picture of restored order, indicating stable continuity in the future. The sequel of Othello is based upon several major themes and developments, and the discovery of the dead woman, with the accompanying expressions of horror, give way to explication, remorse, and atonement. The employment of dynamic motifs ends with Othello's suicide. The final segment, the commentary, is wholly static. In short, stasis, reestablishment of stability, and ending are interwoven. Grief, while not dead, is yet controlled. With the fading away of conflict in the final lines, the view not only distances but also expands to include the characters assembled on the stage and, by implication, the entire represented society, along with the government and ethos upon which the continuity of the existing order is based.

No such expanding vision is evident in Le More de Venise. Until the final curtain, attention remains focused upon the hero, the immensity of his grief, and the shock of his sudden suicide. Action hurtles forward, only to cease abruptly with the end of the drama. The major function of Vigny's ending, which consists of only one part, the sequel, is to maintain action and emotion at a high and rising intensity. That of the closing commentary of Shakespearean closure, however, is to provide a framework of stability within the contours of which tragedy is tempered.

A further question arises from the juxtaposition of the two endings, that of the role of catharsis. Although a cumulative effect of the entire drama, catharsis may be regarded as a process which culminates in the outcome. In short, the 'course of events involving pity and fear' is carried to completion with 'the purification of these painful or fatal acts.'[5] Catharsis is thus bound in with the structure of the reconciliatory ending. If, led by human error, fate, and his own hamartia, the hero commits a horrorful transgression, and is by that token involved in events which evoke pity and yet more horror, his purification results from the new insights derived from his experience, and the reinstatement of his grandeur and the deepening of his vision. Correspondingly, the represented world of the drama moves from an initial state of relative equilibrium through chaos to a final stage of at least partial harmony. On yet another level, this experience is shared by the audience, caught up in the illusionistic world of the drama.

The 'scripted proofs which clarify situations and enlighten the audience so that the plotted actions first evoke and then modify the spectators' emotional responses'[6] are present in the ending of Othello but largely absent in Le More de Venise. Brief as it is, the concluding commentary of Shakespeare's tragedy has a function which outweighs its length in importance: it depicts a world which, saddened yet unshattered, incorporates a continuing stable life force. A similar effect is notably absent in Vigny's version as, amid the shocked cries of his followers and the vehemence of his own self-reproach, Othello's dramatic suicide gesture concludes the play. The question emerges, therefore, if catharsis--leaving aside the controversies which attend the definition of the term--is still a relevant concept in the ending of the romantic drama, of which Vigny's drama here serves as an illustrative example.

The comparison of these two endings suggests that a major change has transpired in the history of dramatic closure from Shakespeare to Vigny. Le More de Venise is, however, merely one instance of the pronounced but largely still overlooked transformations in dramatic closure which characterize the Romantic Era. In his note to the adaptation, Vigny is self-consciously aware of a new set of forms and expectations. To the French romantic playwright of 1829, the need to end a play on a pronounced note of action and emotion is already evident. The structure of Vigny's ending, which the present study will designate 'climactic,' represents only one of several types of closure practised by the European Romantics. In the forthcoming chapters of our study, the diversity and the 'unity in multeity' of the romantic theory and practice of dramatic closure will be probed, defined and demonstrated.

## Notes

[1] Alfred de Vigny, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. F. Baldensperger, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 76 (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), I, p. 478. Subsequent quotations from Vigny will be incorporated in the text and will refer to this edition by volume and page number, preceded by the author's initial: e.g. (V, I, p.--).

[2] The term 'dynamic motif' is that of B. Tomaševskij in his essay 'Thematics,' in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. and intro. Lee T. Lemon and M. Reis (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 61-95. Our application of Tomaševskij's method will be outlined in Chapter Three. (Note: Although the translation by Lemon and Reis transliterates the author's name as 'Tomashevsky,' we have adopted here and with other Slavic names the system preferred by many Slavists.)

[3] Robert Heilman, referring to the sense of continuity emerging from the final scene of the Shakespearean drama, notes that those characters 'whose substantialness, in themselves and in affairs, has been well established' frequently may voice 'the effective continuance in life.' For this and other observations which offer illuminating insights when applied to closure on a comparative level, see his *Tragedy and Melodrama: Versions of Experience* (Seattle and London: Univ. of Washington Press, 1968), p. 161. See also Theophil Spoerri, 'Das Problem des Tragischen. Aus der Perspektive des französischen Dramas gesehen,' in *Tragik und Tragödie*, ed. V. Sander (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), p. 78, where the final sense of calm is extended to the emotional responses of the receiver.

[4] William Shakespeare, *Othello* (V, ii) in *The Complete Works*, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn, 1936), p. 1284. This edition of Shakespeare will be cited throughout.

[5] *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*, trans. and commentary by G. Else (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), p. 221.

[6] N. Kruse, 'The Process of Aristotelian Catharsis: A Reidentification,' *Theatre Journal* 31 (1979), p. 169.

# CHAPTER THREE

## The Ending of the 'Dramatic Narrative:'
## Definition and Conventional Structure

The contention that the serious drama of the German, English and French Romantics marks a radical departure from the conventional structures and functions of closure is meaningless if unaccompanied by two preliminary stages. First it is necessary to determine as closely and precisely as possible what is meant by the concepts 'ending' and 'closure' in drama; more generally, a method of analysis needs to be delineated. The second stage involves a movement backward in literary evolution to the roots of Western tragedy. While our term 'serious drama' is, as pointed out earlier, a general designation referring to a variety of subgenres, such as the closet drama, drame de fauteuil, Lesedrama, romantic tragedy, Schicksalstragödie, mystery play, dramatic poem, or, most simply, drama, these forms distinguish themselves in terms of their derivation and departure from the tragic tradition. Naturally, any changes in theory or practice are gradual, and transitional developments, particularly in the European Baroque and the latter half of the eighteenth century, must not be overlooked. Shifts in aesthetics, moreover, interlink with transformations in ethos and social, political, and historical circumstances. 'Conventional' or 'traditional,' therefore, will refer to the closural norms and generic expectations stemming from Greek Antiquity and the Aristotelian-based tragic tradition.

The first stage thus involves a necessary clarification of terminology and methodology. If 'closure' is viewed as the process whereby a text comes to an end, attention thus focuses on the concept of 'ending.' Aristotle's disarmingly simple definition comes to mind:

> 'Whole' is that which has beginning, middle and end. A 'beginning' is that which does not itself necessarily follow something else, but after which something else naturally exists or happens; an 'end,' the other way round, is that which itself naturally exists after another thing, either of necessity or as a general rule, but not something else after it . . . .[1]

This formulation breaks down in face of an equally simple question: where does the ending begin?

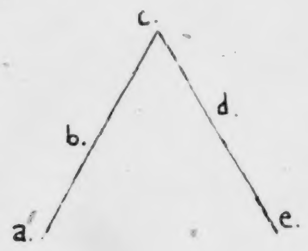
'Dénouement' and 'catastrophe' have, among a host of loosely-defined literary terms, received vague and contradictory definitions, an observation confirmed by reference to a number of prominent literary handbooks. The relatively recent _Dictionnaire du théâtre_, for instance, refers to 'dénouement' as the '_moment de la fable_ où les _conflits_ et les contradictions sont résolus . . . parfois au prix d'un événement violent (_la catastrophe_).'[2] Under the heading 'catastrophe,' however, we find that it is the 'moment final de la tragédie qui dénoue le drame.'[3] On the one hand, therefore, 'catastrophe' appears to indicate an event in the story, and on the other, a structural subdivision of the drama. No importance is given to the portion of the text that frequently follows the final major action, what we have here called the 'commentary.' Among German reference works, Wilpert's _Sachwörterbuch_ is no more successful in offering a comprehensive definition: the reader is referred from the term 'Lösung' to 'Katastrophe,' and the latter is equated with the 'turning-point' which extends to the end of the drama.[4] English-language handbooks offer no more clarification. For example, Abrams'

Glossary of Literary Terms suggests that 'catastrophe' applies only to tragedy, while 'dénouement' may refer to both tragedy and comedy. Using the example of Hamlet, Abrams then specifies that the catastrophe is the point where the deaths of the main characters occur. He omits to observe, however, that the tragedy does not end abruptly at this point, and ignores the significance of Fortinbras' arrival and the resumption of political order in the state of Denmark. The dénouement, he goes on to maintain, is a 'more general term for this point [i.e. the catastrophe] and what follows'[5] (my insertion). From the above, we may justly or mistakenly infer that 'catastrophe' refers to the death scene in tragedy, while 'dénouement' is used, for either comedy or tragedy, as an all-purpose label for both the 'death-scene' and whatever dialogue and actions may come after. The second edition of Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage provides yet another illustration of the confusion of the two terms, along with an uncustomary etymological inaccuracy. 'Dénouement' is here considered preferable 'to the English catastrophe because in popular use that word has lost its neutral sense.'[6] The entanglement of literary terms evident from the above examples is thus far from 'unknotting' itself.

The terms 'catastrophe' and 'dénouement' have therefore been avoided in the present study, except in direct quotations, and replaced by 'ending,' 'closure,' or 'outcome.' Not only their imprecise usage, but also etymological factors preclude their adoption in a study of dramatic closure. 'Dénouement,' with its sense of 'untying' or 'unknotting,' applies only to a limited number of plays. Only those with a central conflict and a completely exposed resolution can be said to be 'untied.' This meaning eliminates even plays such as Orestes with a deus ex machina resolution, where the conflict does not unravel itself, but rather, is abruptly terminated through the intervention of a higher power. Furthermore, the epic and lyric forms evolved by the Romantics and twentieth-century playwrights possess little staggering of conflict and, by extension, no definitive point of resolution. By the same token, the Greek derivation of 'catastrophe,' with its sense of 'turning,' presupposes a tight linkage of action and tension. Even in conventional delineations of dramatic form, as reference to Freytag's theory will affirm, the turning-point, return, or fall begins with the climax and is only reinforced by the final event or catastrophe. Moreover, if the catastrophe of Hamlet is, as in Abrams' example above, equated with the death of the main character, this disqualifies Fortinbras' assumption of power as an 'action.' For these reasons, 'ending,' 'closure,' and 'outcome' emerge as practical substitutes for the term 'dénouement,' while 'catastrophe' will, as developed below, be replaced by the designation 'introductory motif.'

The problem of situating the ending within the system of the drama still remains at this point. The well-known and still frequently-cited pyramidic representation of dramatic structure as evolved by Gustav Freytag places the ending within the 'falling' action' or 'counterplay:'[7]

Fig. 1.



a. introduction
b. rise
c. climax
d. return or fall
e. catastrophe

Three objections may, however, be raised to this delineation. First, it applies only to a limited number of dramas, even in the centuries preceding Romanticism. Second, little attempt is made to distinguish between form and content. The fortunes of the hero are made to determine, in effect, the rising and falling course of the action. Third, Freytag's schema takes into account only marginally the structure and function of the ending. That the action rises to a single mid-point, the climax, and falls away to a single end-point, the catastrophe, makes no allowance for the complexity and the significance of closural structure.

The pyramidic form which, according to Freytag, characterizes the drama is impelled upward when the hero, overcome by a certain desire, takes action. The turning-point or climax changes the course of developments. The protagonist's previous deeds now react against him, and the external world, which he has sought to conquer, overpowers him. The 'return,' 'counterplay,' or 'fall' is the beginning of the path toward defeat, until 'diese Gegenwirkung . . . in der Schlußkatastrophe mit unwiderstehlicher Gewalt den Helden unterliegen macht.'[8] While the remainder of the ending beyond the catastrophe does not figure in Freytag's schema, he yet describes it in the accompanying explications as the point where harmony is reestablished: 'der Zustand, wo die Wiederherstellung der Ruhe nach dem Kampfe sichtbar wird.'[9] Other functions of the ending, such as the linking of past, present and future, the objective assessment of the tragic events, the eulogy of the hero, the expansion of the focus to a larger social group than that represented in the story proper, and the unveiling of the prevalent concept of socio-political order remain unmentioned.

When Freytag's model is applied, difficulties arise. As a single event, the 'climax' is relatively rare. Where fresh impulses are staggered, any selection of one peak action is bound to be arbitrary. The 'climax' of Euripides' Orestes, for instance, is lost in a network of action; to say that the 'falling action' begins after the sentencing of the hero and his sister to death is a simplification. No catastrophe, moreover, exists as an inevitable outcome of the climax, for a wilful road of vengeance leads to ever-renewed complications. Equally incongruous with the idea of falling action is the sudden twist in intrigue with the deus ex machina resolution. The Gordian knot of the intrigue is in this way cut rather than untied, and marks a sudden rupture in the course of action with an accompanying imposition of order. By extension, the ending as a component structure of dramatic form cannot rest merely upon the fall of the hero.

A potentially more fruitful approach lies in viewing drama as a narrative system. In short, the drama--with the partial exception of epic forms, where a succession of states or situations is represented rather than an interlinked series of actions--is a series of narrated states and events which, in causal-temporal order, tell a story. At this point, Tomaševskij's formalist delineation of narrative in his essay 'Thematics' may be adapted to provide a means of reassessing dramatic structure and fitting the concept of the 'ending' into that of the drama as a structural system.[10]

The theme, or 'what is being said' is, for Tomaševskij, the unifying element of narrative.[11] This may in turn be divided into small thematic elements or motifs: bound motifs, which are necessary to the coherence of a narrative and hence cannot be omitted in a retelling; and free motifs, which may be left out without disturbing the causal-chronological order of events. When bound motifs are rearranged (as in a retelling) in their causal-temporal order, the story emerges; in the actual text, however, they are arranged according to the aesthetics of the text and, as such, constitute plot. In this structuring of motifs we find the forces that carry the action forward to accomplish changes in situation or in the interrelationships of characters at any given moment. As the propelling forces behind changing situations, bound motifs are almost always dynamic, unlike static ones, which do not aid in the development of the action.

To this point in Tomaševskij's outline of narrative, structure is merely viewed as an inter-related sequence of actions within a temporal frame. The intrigue, or the conduct of the struggle among characters or groups of characters, succeeds story and plot as the third structural level. A dialectical pattern is inherent in the progression from an initial situation through a state of conflict to the establishment of a new situation. An increase in tension accompanies the strengthening of conflict: 'The increase in tension is proportionate to the proximity of a great change of fortune. Tension is usually achieved by preparing for the change in situation.'[12]

In a sense, therefore, both Freytag and Tomaševskij identify a rising and a falling progression in the drama and the narrative respectively. While the German scholar, however, identifies form with content, and content with the fortunes of the hero, the Russian formalist bases his analysis on the hierarchy of structural components that constitute the architecture of the work. At the same time, divergence does not preclude certain similarities. A dialectical movement is inherent in both theories, which recognize a progression from an initial state of relative harmony through intensifying conflict to the establishment of a more or less definitive 'ending.' Concurrently, while Tomaševskij reveals a greater awareness of the distinctions between form and content than Freytag, the two components are nevertheless interlinked. The very recognition of 'bound' motifs as opposed to 'static' ones suggests that content is being interpreted in a formal capacity. The identification of a climax, moreover, even if this is viewed as a moment of supreme tension and not as a 'turning-point' in the fortunes of the hero, is yet contingent upon an apprehension of content.

Tomaševskij, like Freytag, emphasizes the finality and the reinstated harmony of the ending. Here again the description focuses upon a somewhat traditional or conventional concept of narrative. In dialectical terms, the Russian Formalist's view of the ending may be described as a state of synthesis following the previous disharmony of conflict. The termination of the verbal text concurs with the resolution of tension:

> Usually at the end of the story all the conflicts are reconciled and the interests harmonized . . . . The later harmonious situation, which does not require further development, will neither evoke nor arouse the reader's anticipation. That is why the condition at the end of a work is so static. This static condition is called the ending.[13]

Tomaševskij does not pursue his discussion of the ending beyond the above generalization. Although he stipulates that the outcome is 'usually' static, he considers no other possibilities. In particular, the insights which could, it may be conjectured, result from a historical examination of closure are not suggested.

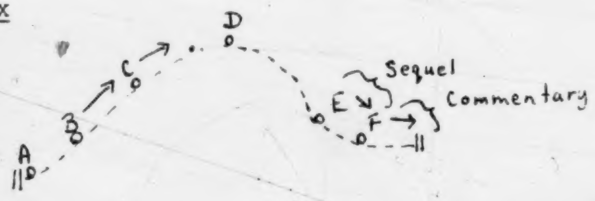
In spite of the highly general nature of Tomaševskij's view of the ending, his concept of narrative may serve as a means of situating the ending within the system of the drama. In formalist terms, it is the portion headed off by a bound (and, therefore, usually dynamic) motif which leads to a new and final situation and continues to the end of the represented action. In a drama with two or more distinct or relatively separate story lines, the respective endings need not necessarily coincide: as, for instance, in Beaumont's Knight of the Burning Pestle (perf. c. 1607, pr. 1613), where the 'play within a play' comes to an end, only to be replaced by the actions and dialogue of audience members, or, for more extreme examples, in Tieck's Der gestiefelte Kater (1797) and Die verkehrte Welt (1799), where narrative segments whimsically divide and intersect. In such dramas, the repective interrelated motifs leading to their consequent final situations may be singled out. Figure 2 represents diagrammatically the course of the intrigue in a conventionally-structured drama with a single plot, Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, to illustrate our application of Tomaševskij's method, while Figure 3 sketches the course of action in Euripides' Orestes, illustrating a double rise in action with a deus ex machina ending.

The present study will thus regard the ending as the segment of the drama which establishes the final situation by means of a bound motif, here referred to as the 'introductory' motif. The establishment of a method and a set of terminology leads to an examination of the component structures and functions of closure from antiquity to the eighteenth century. The forthcoming overview in Chapter Four suggests that the traditional structure of the ending includes, as in Shakespeare's Othello, a 'sequel,' wherein the consequences of the introductory motif are established, and a 'commentary,' consisting in most instances of a retrospective assessment, an affirmation of an end to conflict, and an expanding view outward and forward into the future.

Fig. 2

Note: The curve, as suggested by Lewis Campbell in Tragic Drama in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Shakespeare (1904; rpt. New York: Russell, 1965), has been used to represent the 'natural path of a projectile in rapic motion' (p. 74). This figure has here been found preferable to Freytag's pyramidic delineation, for it better summarizes the interlinking of events and the variations and modifications affected by the motif-structure of the intrigue.

Oedipus Rex



A: Initial situation (if this is pronouncedly stable or prolonged, a flattened starting course may be sketched).

B: Expository motifs (location is variable: may be scattered throughout story line, as in Oedipus; hence the arrow).

C: Exciting force(s); aggregate of motifs propelling the heightening of intrigue; hence the arrow.

D: Climax: height of tension developed by motif interaction; major change in situation accomplished.

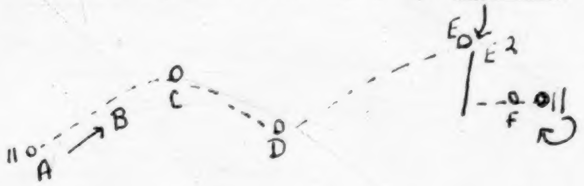
E: 'Introductory' motif: bound motif which leads to final situation. Two or more motifs may also work in conjunction, as with the suicide of Jocasta and the self-blinding of Oedipus.

E →F: Sequel--outgrowth of motif (E), whereby the final situation is established.

F →|| Commentary: detached reassessment, eulogy, expansion from individual to societal focus, indication of future stability and harmony.

Fig. 3

'Deus ex machina' ending (e.g. Orestes)



A→B: Initial situation; exposition bears major role.

C: Climax 1: Judgement of Argyves, followed by temporary lull in action: despair, passivity.

D: Renewed exciting force: determination to rebel, seek vengeance. Intrigue reaches highest point of tension (Climax 2: E').

E: 'Deus ex machina'--force external to foregoing intrigue, hence ↲; blocks consequences of preceding action; also 'cuts' story line, serving as introductory motif to the ending. Since course of action radically shifts, the vertical | represents a break.

$E^2$→F: Sequel: Apollo imposes a final situation.

F →‖: Brief commentary of chorus; ironic effect in Orestes, serving to throw into a questionable light the validity of the ending--hence ↻ indicates continuing tension between ending and core intrigue.

## Notes

[1] Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument, trans. and annotated by Gerald F. Else (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), p. 282.

[2] Thomas Pavis, Dictionnaire du théâtre (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1980), p. 107.

[3] Pavis, p. 56.

[4] G. von Wilpert, Sachwörterbuch der Literatur (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1969), pp. 478, 399; see also Karl Gröning and Werner Kließ, Friedrichs Theaterlexikon, ed. Henning Rischbieter (Velber bei Hannover: Friedrich Verlag, 1969), p. 9, under entry 'Akt.'

[5] A Glossary of Literary Terms, rev. M.H. Abrams, based on the version of Dan S. Norton and Peters Rushton (New York: Holt, 1957, rpt. 1961), p. 72.

[6] H.W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, Second Ed., rev. by Sir Ernest Gowers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 125. See also under the heading 'dénouement,' A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms, ed. Roger Fowler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); J.A. Cuddon, A Dictionary of Literary Terms (London: Deutsch, 1977); The York Dictionary of English, French, German and Spanish Literary Terms and their Origins (Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1976); H. Morier, Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris, 1961).

[7] G. Freytag, Die Technik des Dramas , 13th ed. (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1863; rpt. Darmstadt, 1965), p. 102. In spite of its age, Freytag's work continues to be cited in treatments of dramatic structure. See, among others, Lewis Campbell, Tragic Drama in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare (1904; rpt. New York: Russell, 1965, p. 79; Paul Levitt, A Structural Approach to the Analysis of Drama (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 13; and Manfred Pfister, Das Drama: Theorie und Analyse, Uni-Taschenbucher 580 (München: Fink, 1977), pp. 320-21.

[8] Freytag, p. 95.

[9] Freytag, p. 95

[10] Boris Tomaševskij, 'Thematics,' in Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays, trans. and intro. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, Regents Critics Series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 61-95. Acknowledgement and thanks are here due to Dr. Lubomir Doložel (University of Toronto), with whom the application of this method was discussed, and to my colleague P.Z. Schubert (University of Alberta).

[11] Tomaševskij, p. 63.

[12] Tomaševskij, p. 72.

[13] Tomaševskij, p. 71.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Dramatic Closure: Historical Development

### 1. Greek Antiquity

The ending of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex (c. 430 B.C.) offers a paradigm of conventional tragic closure. The outcome is relatively detailed, for the protagonist is enlightened about his true identity and the nature of his unwitting transgressions well before the end of the drama. Exposition plays the major role in the development of the intrigue as, unremittingly, the hero's search for the cause of pestilence in Thebes causes the finger of guilt to point more and more directly at him. The moment of total revelation thus constitutes the climax or point of crisis, which leads directly to the introductory motif: Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus's self-blinding.

The sequel of Oedipus Rex begins, therefore, on a pronounced note of grief and violence. The honour of the royal family of Thebes has been undermined, and with the physical and spiritual disintegration of the ruler, the state is in shambles. Significantly, however, the tragedy does not end at this point, for the final situation incorporates a modification of the tragic reversal accomplished by the climax. Here, the balancing and harmonizing function of the ending is foremost. Tragic grief is tempered and an image of the stable continuity of the state emerges. Oedipus's successor, Creon, is the voice of reconciliation and the continuity of positive life forces, who not only handles the immediate needs of Oedipus and his daughters, but also persuades the hero to see his personal disaster in an objective light. As Gerd Krämer points out in his comprehensive study of closure in Greek tragedy, 'Der Kalkül, in dem sich Ödipus Rechenschaft über seine Tat--die Blendung--ablegt, markiert den Punkt, an dem er sich wiedergefunden hat. Die Szene mit seinen Töchtern gibt den Ausblick in die Zukunft; Kreon nimmt das Vermächtnis des gestürzten Herrschers entgegen.'[1] Once the banished but reconciled hero is led away, the chorus--a communal voice which accomplishes the transition from the personal to the universal--speaks the final words of the drama:

> You that live in my ancestral Thebes, behold this Oedipus--
> him who knew the famous riddles and was a man most masterful;
> not a citizen who did not look with envy on his lot--
> see him now and see the breakers of misfortune swallow him!
> Look upon that last day always. Count no mortal happy till
> he has passed the final limit of his life secure from pain.[2]

A new equilibrium, albeit saddened and subdued, thus evolves gradually and organically from the heights of tragic anguish. Three functions are fulfilled by this brief passage: first, the viewpoint is expanded from its sharp focus on the hero to take in not only Thebes but also the specators and the very nature of human existence and suffering; second, the major events of the drama are summarized from a detached standpoint; and third, acceptance of the fate which motivates destiny is voiced.

The structure of the ending of Oedipus Rex is thus marked by a transition from dynamic to static motifs, as action concludes and commentary prevails. The outcome is, however, only partially 'closed,' for a line of stable continuation is indicated; nevertheless, a harmonious resolution removes all lingering questions, apart from perhaps the awareness, on the part of an audience well-versed in classical mythology, that tragic action will be resumed in the succeeding parts of the trilogy.[3]

The above pattern of a gradual return to equilibrium after shattering events is typical of Sophocles, and repeats itself with minor variations in Oedipus at Colonus (405 B.C.) and Antigone (c. 441 B.C.). In Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus's death is welcomed in an atmosphere of benediction and retribution. Theseus, the lord and ruler of Athens, is enabled, through a vow made to Oedipus, to preserve his land from his enemies; in return, he vows to protect Antigone and Ismene and to conduct them back to Thebes. With a plea from the chorus that the weeping cease, and an avowal that all things are in the hands of God, the tragedy concludes on an even more pronounced note of new hope than Oedipus Rex.[4]

The ending of Antigone, which follows hard upon the introductory motif (the death of Euridice) is more abrupt than in either of the other two tragedies of the cycle. Despair, in the form of Creon's remorse and suffering, continues until the very end. Nevertheless, positive forces are at work. The preceding disasters apparently have taught Creon justice and subdued his pride. Once again, the chorus is a voice of acceptance, continuity and resumption of order:

> That is the future's. We must look to now.
> What will be is in other hands than ours.[5]

The role of the chorus in voicing a point of arrival which is also a resurrection of communal life is bound in with Classical form and the mythical, ritualistic elements contained within the tragedy. The choral exodos marks more than the mere end of represented action and the withdrawal of the players; it gives expression to the final stage of what is, as Francis Fergusson summarizes, a ritual presenting 'the tragic but perennial, even normal, quest of the whole City for its wellbeing.'[6] The content of the commentary is thus determined by the communal ethos upon which the very being and survival of the society is based, and represents in Oedipus Rex 'the point of view and faith of Thebes as a whole, and, by analogy, of the Athenian audience.'[7] From this point of view, the significance of the ending, and, in particular, of its expansion from the individual to the general, goes beyond that of a mere syntactical structure marking the termination of a narrative, and forms part of the semantics of the drama.

The means of arriving at a stable outcome may, however, vary. Two basic types of the 'traditional' ending are discernable: in the first and most orthodox, the final situation is a direct and logical outcome of the preceding action; in the second, the deus ex machina, an external force intervenes at a point where the intrigue has reached a seeming impasse, and the Gordian knot of complication is deftly cut rather than systematically and logically untied.

Euripides' Orestes (408 B.C.) serves here not only as a prime example of the deus ex machina outcome, but also as an early illustration of an ironic game with an outwardly serious dramatic ending.[8] The plot consists, it may be argued, of two major upsurges of action and tension, separated by a temporary downswing. The 'beginning of the ending' does not occur immediately after the death sentence on Orestes and Electra has been pronounced; rather, a momentary retardation of action after this development gives way to a renewed increase of conflict in the form of a violent outburst of murder and vengeance.

When the drama commences, chaos already prevails, for the opening events are a direct consequence of Orestes' earlier murder of his adulterous mother. In the aftermath, with which Orestes deals, neither the secular nor the heavenly order prevails. On the command of Apollo, Orestes has wreaked vengeance upon Clytemnestra; now, overcome by madness at the instigation of the Furies, he also faces the wrath and judgement of civic powers. Unaided by Apollo and driven mad, Orestes is the victim of the Argyves and of the manipulations and treachery of opportunistic friends such as Menelaus. With the failure of his desperate pleas for acquittal, the drama reachers its first downswing in the form of the hero's passive despair. Judgement leads, however, to revenge, and the intrigue gathers renewed impetus. The action advances rapidly as Orestes, Electra, and their friend Pylades, overcome by blood-lust, murder Helen and seize Hermione. With the palace engulfed in flames, Orestes and Pylades poised on a rooftop, a sword held at Hermione's throat, and a crowd of aghast spectators, the drama hovers on the brink of final chaos and disaster. A new action, however, abruptly intercedes to alter the course of events and to block the consequences of the preceding motif. In short, a deus ex machina renders an unexpected twist to the intrigue, and shifts the direction of the outcome.

The component structure of the ending remains, however, fairly constant. A dynamic motif--the arrival of Apollo and the resurrected Helen above the palace--introduces a sequel followed by a brief and cryptic commentary by the chorus. With a neatness that casts an ironic tone on the rampant violence and immorality of the earlier actions, Apollo decrees an end to conflict, assigns to each character his future fate, and serves as a matchmaker.

The outward form of Orestes--action which culminates in near disaster, followed by resolution and harmony--thinly masks the drama in a conventional guise. The very glibness of the reconciliatory ending suggests that the dramatist is superimposing an appearance of harmony on a universe of directionless men and irresponsible gods. At the same time, the existences of the introductory motif, sequel and commentary, even with ironic intent, indicates an awareness of structural and functional norms and expectations. In effect, Euripedes uses an outwardly resolved and positive outcome to attack rationally the values it incorporates.

The above two endings from Oedipus Rex and Orestes represent two basic patterns of the traditional ending. While both bring the respective dramas to a state of reconciliation and repose, the ending of Oedipus Rex evolves in a linear fashion, steered forward by cause and effect, while the latter is 'superimposed,' and results from an abrupt shift in the story and the intervention of a force external to the core plot.

From antiquity to the eighteenth century, dramatic closure, with some modifications, tends to follow the structures and functions exemplified by these two endings. Of the two types, that of Oedipus Rex is by far the more commonly employed in the serious drama. A logical cause and effect, impulse and consequence relationship links the ending of the serious drama with the foregoing intrigue. Castelvetro's Poetica,

(1570) is representative of the condemnation of this mode of closure:

> The solution of the plot ought to be brought about by the plot itself, i.e. the striking of the danger and the ceasing of the difficulty should themselves be constituents of the plot following the nature of the danger and of the difficulty by necessity or by verisimilitude.[9]

## 2. The Senecan Tradition

While the typological traits of the conventional ending are already evident in Attic tragedy, their transmission throughout Europe takes a detour via Seneca. Eckard Lefèvre summarizes the historical course of the Senecan influence:

> Obschon Senecas Tragödien ohne die attischen Literatur nicht denkbar sind, haben sie sich unvergleichlich größerer Nachwirkung erfreut als die Urbilder der europäischen Tragödie. Die Wiedererweckung der vier bekannten antiken Tragiker ist im Verhältnis zu ihrer zeitlichen Reihenfolge den umgekehrten Weg gegangen: Hat Seneca nahezu uneingeschränkt die tragische Produktion der Jahrhunderte vom beginnenden Humanismus bis zum Ende des Barock in allen europäischen Literaturen beherrscht, so wurde er mit dem Aufkommen des Griechenenthusiasmus am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in der allgemeinen Wertschätzung . . . abgelöst.[10]

Lefèvre goes on to observe that structural rather than linguistic reasons explain this early impact of Seneca. The Roman dramatist offers easily imitable models into which subsequent writers are able to inject their current preoccupations. In Seneca's dramas, past events, whether historical or mythical, are interpreted in the light of the present; while affective elements prevail, his characters are nevertheless types, and lend themselves to imitation. Thematically, moreover, the Stoic view of man's conflict between reason and passion, incorporated in the Senecan drama, is seized upon by future generations.[11]

Seneca's endings yet diverge in part from earlier and later closural practice. Rhetorical flourishes remain as bombastic as at the highest point of intrigue. A swift but conclusive 'checkmate,' whereby the best player in a game of deception accomplishes vengeance on his foe, frequently constitute the outcome. At the same time, the final situation is fully prepared and recurrently forecast throughout the tragedy. The interest lies therefore not in the matter of the ending, but in the manner whereby the victim seizes the bait of the victor. Decorative metaphors, thundering rhetoric, antithetical exchanges, and expressions of anguish are integral to Senecan closure. With attention remaining focused on the immediate dramatic situation, the resolutions evince little of the positive socio-political vision that emerges from those of the Elizabethan Age in England and Neo-Classicism in France.

Thyestes (c. 50 A.D.) exemplifies this highly contrived game of vengeance. The story itself is composed of a thin thread of active motifs, and characterization is flat. Thyestes is a static drama consisting of bombastic tirades which narrate the few but gruesome situations. This precursor of the nineteenth-century 'Schicksalstragödie' does not work itself out in surprise twists of intrigue but in a planned and fully predicted series of moves. Once Atreus's overtures of friendship have been accepted by his brother Thyestes, a Messenger's account graphically describes in retrospect the murder, dismemberment, and culinary preparation of Thyestes' three sons.[12] With macabre prescience, the Messenger describes the banquet scene that will, in the succeeding act, terminate the drama. A choral ode next impedes the action, forcing it to hover over incipient disaster. In Act V, the action advances only slightly. The events of the banquet are detailed, Atreus's manoeuvres disclosed to his brother, and the ensuing digestive upset graphically chronicled. Parallel statements of vengeance now bring the tragedy to a 'full stop:' Atreus gloats over the accomplishment of his revenge, and Thyestes imprecates the gods to punish his brother.

Seneca's ending of Thyestes reveals an elaboration or doubling of the sequel-commentary pattern, a drawing-out which matches the overblown rhetoric and paucity of action. The Messenger's report contains the introductory motif: the preparation of the filial banquet. The ensuing choral ode forms the first stage of the commentary in its voicing of grief and chaos. Only the stoical observation that, in an unjust and cruel universe, death offers an antidote to fear makes a token gesture toward acceptance.

The banquet, a working-out of the events already elaborated in the preceding act, serves chiefly as the sequel. The finality of the outcome is reinforced by the realization of the Messenger's forecasts and by the brothers' closing statements. In a world steeped in violence, where resolution is accomplished solely by a stoical acceptance of suffering and hope of its remission in death, and where justice consists in a repayment of violence, harmony lies only in the cessation of action. On another level, the larger-than-life mouthpieces of human passion would, in face of a reconciliatory ending, lose all substance and become mere figments of rhetoric.

## 3. The Middle Ages

With the onset of the Middle Ages and the development of liturgical ritual, the functions of the dramatic ending remain largely constant. If the Roman mass is, as Glynne Wickham suggests, viewed as 'a kind of theatre in which the actions and gestures of the ritual accompanying the liturgy linked the events of the historical past commemorated by the office with the immediate present for celebrants and congregations alike,'[13] the 'dismissal' corresponds to the Greek exodos. The Easter Introit, developed in the tenth century, serves as an example. The 'introductory motif' to the 'ending' consists in the symbolic demonstration that Christ has risen from the cross, and is verbally affirmed by the priest's statement that death has been vanquished; then, as a 'commentary' of praise, eulogy, and thanksgiving, the members of the religious 'community'--celebrants and congregation--exit, singing the Te Deum.[14]

Once the medieval theatre has moved beyond the ecclesiastical premises, the pattern of sequel and commentary is perpetuated. French Passion Plays, for instance, incorporate a reminder of the moral and religious purpose of the performance, and close with the communal singing of the Te Deum. The analogue for the Biblical history of Noah's Ark represents a shrewish wifeedisputing with her husband. Only when peace is restored do the dove and the rainbow appear to symbolically reinforce, like the calming words of the Ancient Greek chorus, the reinstatement of harmony after chaos.[15] Other forms, such as the Mummer's Play, terminate with dancing, a typological anticipation of the song-and-dance finale customary in the early melodrama, which here, as in other instances, confirms its inheritance of popular as well as literary structures.

An additional parallel between the ending of the Classical and Medieval drama exists in the latter's use of an expositor-narrator. Like the ancient chorus, this voice informs the audience of the forthcoming action, its role in the entire narrative, and its didactic significance. The expositor's final words, in particular, drive home to the spectators the moral of the spectacle. In the fifteenth-century morality play Everyman, for instance, the protagonist's spiritual quest leads to a final situation through his choice of Good Deeds to guide him beyond the grave. The sequel, with its tone of triumph and praise, not only represents the final situation but also, in a prefiguring of later drama, the emotional climax. This is, however, modified by the exhortatory tone of the commentary when the Doctor appears in the role of 'Epilogue' or Expositor. In words reminiscent of the content of the ending of Oedipus Rex, he traces in retrospect the main stages of the narrative and then expands the subject of his address to include humanity at large. Mankind's choice, he emphasizes, is between perdition and salvation, and only a clear reckoning of Good Deeds, with the help of the Trinity, can lead us heavenward.[16] In this way, the ending expresses an affirmation of both the physical and spiritual levels of existence.

## 4. Renaissance and Baroque Closure

Closural practice in the drama of the early Renaissance reflects a cohesive approach to dramatic form. As in the Senecan tragedy, the finality of the renaissance outcome is echoed by the tone of finality governing the end of each discrete formal segment. A dramatic situation is depicted as a separate stage in a logical, premeditated structure. As Gustave Lanson is one of the first to point out, the concept of action as a propelling force of dramatic development is still virtually non-existent: 'ils [i.e., sixteenth-century dramatists] traitent chaque sujet comme une succession de thèmes poétiques.'[17] The formalist analysis of Darnell Roaten bears out the aptness of this observation with reference to Lazare de Baïf's Electra (1537): 'In the Renaissance theatre, the author created a series of carefully-separated scenes, characterized by unequivocal relationships, all tending to induce a steady, well-marked progress to the clearly anticipated ending.'[18] In a sense, the dramatist, moving from Point 'A' to 'B,' is so concerned with drawing attention to each road sign that the speed of movement becomes irrelevant. This procedure Roaten contrasts with the baroque treatment of closure. The baroque drama, he argues, 'proceeds by means of scenes that are tangled together in apparent disorder, with fluid, uneasy relations whose effect is to conceal partly the carefully prepared conclusion.'[19] The early renaissance tragedy, like the Senecan, is, by way of contrast, a largely static and rhetorical working-out of a story line where the ending is frequently forecast in the opening scene, as, for instance, in Baïf's Electra, Garnier's Hippolyte (1573), Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy (c. 1586), and Montchrestien's Hector (1604). Attempts to generate suspense or uncertainty regarding the ending become, however, progressively more pronounced. One somewhat unsophisticated example may be found in Montchrestien's Hector, where, in spite of the Messenger's presence at the beginning of the fifth act, his tidings of Hector's death are delayed long enough for Priam, Hécube and Andromaque to voice their anxieties.[20]

As rhetorical constructs, where one situation is 'set in' to replace another, and where character shows little development, many sixteenth and early seventeenth-century dramas offer little of the fluid shifting from the historical present to the future and the expansion from a focused viewpoint to include socio-political well-being on a communal scale that are evident in the Greek tragedy. For this reason, the element of continuity voiced in communal terms is frequently absent. Just as Seneca's Thyestes continues, in the closing scene, to focus sharply on the 'full stop' of the vengeance intrigue, so The Spanish Tragedy affords no alleviating vision of triumph or of renewed life in its sequel and commentary. The completeness of revenge and torture awaiting the villains in the Underworld remains the thematic focus of the ending. Other dramas, such as Hector, eulogise the dead hero and voice a 'memento mori,' while yet others, such as Hardy's Scédase (1605-15, pr. 1624) combines praise of the protagonist with a Stoic argument in favour of honourable suicide. While these verbal tags endow the ending with a sense of stability, they still do not evoke the image of a regenerated society.

With the Shakespearean ending, however, a marked development is evident. The drama has become dynamic, complicated by tributary plots and unexpected twists in the intrigue; with a rising nationalistic consciousness and strengthened political cohesiveness, an ethos imbued with survival and a continuing life force tempers the tragic grief of the ending. The final statements of the Shakespearean tragedy are often made by secondary characters who have remained more or less intact throughout the tragic action. The voices of stability and renewed social order, these speakers focus upon two major themes: either censure, as in Richard III (1594) or praise, as in Julius Caesar (c. 1599), of the hero and the immediate problem of recreating a stable state. Octavius's closing words in Julius Caesar typefy this manner of commentary:

> According to his virtue let us use him,
> With all respect and rites of burial.
> Within my tent his bones tonight shall lie,
> Most like a soldier, ordered honourably.
> So call the field to rest, and let's away
> To part the glories of this happy day.[21]

In the Shakespearean tragedy as in the Sophoclean, the hero also achieves, at least in part, a type of spiritual equilibrium in the face of disaster and death. Hamlet (1603) serves as an example. Naturally, any resolution of the hero's central problems is only partial; no solution exists for Hamlet's existential dilemma, for his question whether 'to be, or not to be,' and for his plight of being the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong hour. At the same time, the events immediately leading up to his death have forced him into action, and the onslaught of developments, planned and accidental, has solved his philosophical wavering between life and death. After the immensity of the preceding struggle, the sudden quiet of the ending is all the more marked. As in Julius Caesar, a eulogy reinforces the hero's triumph and essential nobility. Left behind to transmit Hamlet's story to humanity, Horatio declares:

> Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! (V, ii, p. 1193)

More directly relevant to the re-establishment of order are the words and actions of the survivors who, in their solidity and relative lack of complexity, provide a foil for Hamlet and indirectly represent the community. Fortinbras, although not untouched by Hamlet's death, is nevertheless a figure of blustering military efficiency. No sooner does he enter upon the scene than he proceeds to assert his rights as Hamlet's successor. The tragedy ends with his orders that Hamlet should be borne in state from the stage to martial music and' 'the rites of war.' The forces of rational, decisive action, equilibrium and an orderly state once more prevail and serve to bring down the drama from the heights of pity and fear achieved in the preceding scenes.

Two additional questions can be posed about the structure of Hamlet: whether the outcome evolves naturally and inevitably, leaving little to chance or contrivance, and whether the action is complete with the final scene. The response to the latter question is straightforward, for the history of Hamlet does indeed end with the hero's death; the fate of the survivors and the state is resolved, and stable continuity signalled. The former question is more complex. Many elements of the intrigue are the result of chance or coincidence, such as the exchange of weapons during the duel and Gertrude's drinking of the poisoned wine meant for her son. Similarly, the arrival of Fortinbras immediately after the combat leaves much to coincidence and carries with it an element of deus ex machina. Nevertheless, Hamlet's demise is inevitable, given his character and the inappropriateness of the demands made upon him. The diverse strands of action have, moreover, flowed together in the final scene to provide a definitive resolution of conflict.

The Elizabethan penchant for a harmonious end to tragic narrative is not only evident in Shakespeare's historical plays but also in his tragic romance Romeo and Juliet (c. 1595). Like Hamlet, this drama provides a wealth of twists of intrigue, coincidence and accident, all of which are, however, directed toward the pathos of the ending. Nevertheless, the tone of the commentary is controlled, largely devoid of the impassioned explosiveness we are later to encounter in the romantic drama. The atmosphere of mourning is sedate, and reconciliation prevails as Montague and Capulet determine to end their enmity and honour the lovers.

Other British dramas of the Renaissance come, as in the foregoing examples, to a static close. Although Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy, unlike Shakespeare's dramas, offers virtually no glimmer of hope to mitigate the atmosphere of revenge and retribution, the motifs of mourning and disposal of the bodies, along with a summarizing commentary on the accomplished action, serve to bring the drama to a gradual halt. Similarly, Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (perf. c. 1590, pr. 1604) does not, unlike Goethe's 'Ur-Faust' and Faust I (c. 1790 and 1808), leave the hero's fate partially unresolved, but depicts him in the throes of his descent to Hell. Although the apocalyptic wrath accompanying the hero's demise and the motion of his fall represent a dynamic motif, the structural significance of the last eight lines of dialogue--the choral commentary--must not be underrated. In this closing address, the reasons for Faust's 'hellish fall,' the completeness of action, and the didactic teaching contained within the plot are highlighted in a logical, emotionally detached manner.[22]

John Webster's The White Devil (perf. c. 1610, pr. 1612) will serve as our final illustration of closure in the tragedy of the British Renaissance. The commentary of this drama is terse, and the rhyming couplet in which it is contained serves to drive home the moral significance. Giovanni, after ordering Lodovico to 'remove the bodies,' concisely summarizes the 'use you ought make of their [the villains'] punishment:'

> Let guilty men remember their black deeds
> Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds.[23]

Other renaissance and baroque tragedies may appear to depart from what is here identified as traditional structure by closing with a dynamic motif such as that of suicide. This manner of closure does not, however, have the same emotional impact as we have remarked in Vigny's Le More de Venise. The suicide motif in Théophile de Viau's Amours tragiques de Pyrame et Thisbé (1623), for example, is preceded by Thisbé's long monologue, which offers a philosophical justification of death. Although the imagery tends to go off in bizarre flights of fancy ending with startling pointes, the heroine's own death emerges as a 'coup . . . gracieux,' a fully-prepared for development.[24] Similarly, Mairet's Sophonisbe (1634) reinforces social stability and continuity in a commentary inserted before the final suicide motif. As Massanisse explains, Sophonisbe's death is necessary for the state, even if it accomplishes his own personal despair. In this way the heroine's suicide announces the restoration of harmony.

The foregoing departures from the usual ordering of the introductory motif, sequel and commentary may, however, be seen within the context of baroque dramaturgy. Concealment, proliferation of intrigue, and surprise are integral to the Baroque Movement, and tend to mask the frequently solid progression of the plot from beginning to end in a network of seeming confusion. In spite of its tortuous path, the maze yet has a distinct point of arrival.

Two closural structures of the baroque drama survive from the ancient and the medieval drama: the deus ex machina resolution, and the direct address to the public to announce the ending. Lope da Vega's closing to Fuente Ovejuna (1619) exemplifies the latter technique:

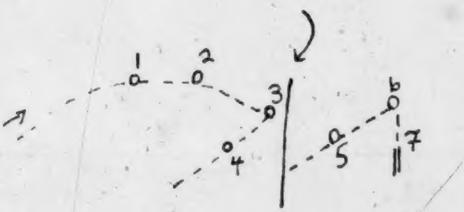
> Frondoso. The King spoke grandly as one would expect
> From one who such great wonders could effect.
> Good night, discreet spectators, all be friends!
> And with this line FUENTE OVEJUNA ends.[25]

While the above structure is largely formulaic and affords an opportunity to salute the reigning monarch, a more significant variation lies in the combination of the complimentary address and a deus ex machina, as in Calderón's La Devoción de la cruz (1643). Here religious faith, in the form of two miracles, vanquishes 'the ratiocinative machinery of the insult-vengeance formula.'[26] This 'machinery' is, in effect, vanquished by the 'stage machinery' of the deus ex machina. At the same time, the miracles, although they are spectacular and unforeseen in view of the banditry and incest of the protagonists, are yet integral to the ethos of a 'mystery play.' Their occurrence, however, as dynamic motifs forming the final situation, and not merely as catalysts to its establishment, is significant. In this way, the baroque drama precipitates the closural structure which has been designated 'climactic' in our discussion of the romantic ending.

An important modification is nevertheless accomplished in La Devoción de la cruz by the concluding verbal tag. With the final miracle, Julia has ascended heavenward on Eusebio's cross at the moment that her father is about to strike her. Abruptly the dynamic motion of the ending is ruptured along with theatrical illusion. Curcio (the father) casts off his role and becomes instead the mouthpiece of the author to announce the end of the spectacle:

> And with this wondrous close
> the author happily concludes
> Devotion to the Cross.[27]

Diagrammatically, the ending may be represented as follows:



1, 2: motifs of 'climax': Eusebio's capture; revelation of brother-sister relationship.
3: 'introductory' motif: Eusebio's death.
4: 'tributary' motif (previously isolated from main plot) flows back into introductory motif: Julia's escape from convent to rejoin Eusebio.
5: sequel: first miracle--resurrection and confession of Eusebio; second death (reconciliation).
Arrival of Julia.
6. sequel: second miracle: repentance, ascension of Julia.
7: 'commentary'--Curcio announces play is over.

In the above schema, two dynamic motifs ([6] and [7]) make up the sequel to the introductory motif. The static motif of the commentary fulfills, however, a 'syntactical' function, for it marks a full stop to the drama and the dispersal of theatrical illusion.

9

At the same time, certain conflicts are not fully resolved. Although the spectator may assume that the miraculous deaths of Curcio's two children have led to his repentance of earlier transgressions, no textual indices to this effect are offered. Yet more questions can be raised concerning the entire code of honour, transgression, and punishment governing the represented society. While the infinite dimensions of heavenly mercy have triumphed over the secular order, we are still led to ask if the earthly code will be in any way revised to remove the grounds for violent revolt.

The undercurrent of unrest lingering in the apparent harmony of Calderón's La Devoción de la cruz emerges more clearly in Andreas Gryphius's Leo Armenius (1650). As Harald Steinhagen points out, the harmonizing power of God does not extend to conditions on earth:

> Die Verheißung des Heils, der substantielle Kern des göttlichen Willens und das Korrelat des irdischen Unheils, das im Wohlergehen der Schuldigen wie im Ungluck der Unschuldigen seine unerträglichste Form annimmt, wird endgültig im Jenseits eingelöst, nicht schon durch diesseitige Eingriffe Gottes positiv oder negativ realisiert. Mit dieser Trennung wird freilich das Diesseits zum entscheidenden Problem für die Menschen.[28]

Cardenio und Celinde (1657), the 'Trauerspiel' with a positive ending, is, unlike Leo Arminius, characterized by reconciliation and the re-affirmation of both the worldly and the Godly order. The latter is, however, on a superior level: 'Wol diesem / der die Welt mit ihrer Pracht verlacht.'[29] Correspondingly, a memento mori, 'denck jede Stund ans Sterben,' closes the drama. In Gryphius's later martyr dramas, however, Steinhagen maintains that there exists a longing to see the secular order reinstated, to the point that the vision of transcendent harmony becomes

'Anklage und Vertröstung zugleich.'[30]

Ambivalence does indeed characterize the ending of the martyr-drama Catharina von Georgien (wr. 1647-51, pr. 1657), which plays against a backdrop of Heaven, Hell and Earth, 'Schauplatz der Sterblichkeit' (I, l. 81). Catharina, Queen of Georgia, remains steadfast in her 'marriage' to Christ and persists in her refusal to marry her heathen captor Chach Abas. Her eventual martyrdom does not, however, close the drama. Her ghost appears to Chach Abas in the final scene, promising him with the downfall of his empire and his personal damnation. Martyrdom thus signifies on the one hand a passageway from a sphere of disaster and death to the eternal reality beyond the world theatre; on the other, the world is not wholly transcended, and political tensions linger. Concurrently, the theme of frustrated love voiced by Chach Abas in the closing lines of the drama further deprives the final situation of peace:

> Doch ist wol herber Rach' und die mehr kan betrüben
> Als daß Wir / Feindin / dich auch Tod stets müssen liben.
> (V, l. 447-48)

With Daniel Casper von Lohenstein the German baroque ending moves even farther away from its classical models. Although the allegorical figures of his choruses 'end up by proclaiming in general the ideal union of Virtue . . . and Reason,' the protagonists' 'sinful striving and deaths form the true dramatic core.'[31] In the elaborate proliferation of rhetorical voices, which alternate between the Streitgrespräch of allegorized concepts and the frenetic outbursts of diverse characters, Lohenstein's endings form a sustained crescendo. The interrelationship of form and content is aptly described by Willi Flemming:

> . . . [Lohensteins] künstlerische Absicht ging ja nicht auf naturgetreue Wiedergabe der Affekte, sondern auf gesteigerte Repräsentation. Die darin enthaltene Mittelbarkeit bringt die Zwiespältigkeit hinein, die nur uns heute, nicht den Zeitgenossen, störend auffällt. Wortkunst und Theaterbild bilden keine organische Einheit, sondern gehen nebeneinander her.[32]

In place of the measured repose characteristic of the outcomes of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Racine, the ending of Sophonisbe (wr. c. 1670, pr. 1680) reveals a constant shifting of thought and reaction:

> Hierba. Ein Himmel schleußt die Seeln / ein Sarch drey Leichen ein.
> Sophonisbe. Sol euer erste Wieg' auch eure Baare sein?
> Orynthia. Hilf Himmel! sie vergehn! sie sincken zu der Erden.
> Sophonisbe. Wir sterben (gutte Nacht!) mit uns Angst und Beschwerden.
> Eleniss. Uns geht der Unglücks-Stern auf / nun die Sonnen falln.
> Himilco. Sol über uns allein der Römer Zornsturm knalln?
> Micipsa / laß' uns auch durch ein beherztes Sterben
> Schimpf und Gefängnis flihn / Ruh / Ehr und Ruhm erwerben![33]

As the voices alternate chaotically, so the sense pivots between protestations of new-found peace and expressions of unalleviated destruction. No lasting reconciliation with the will of fate is, however, implicit. Man and the gods remain antagonistic: 'Ihr unbarmhetz'gen Götter!' (V, l. 501). The idea of 'Erlösung' fuses with that of violence:

> Laßt Schwestern uns nun auch zu der Erlösung eilen/
> Der Brüste reine Milch bepurpern durch dis Schwerdt (V, l. 507)

According to Gerald Gillespie, the death of Sophonisbe is '[an] exit with a grand gesture from a world stage;' this, however, implies no 'real escape, or spiritual salvation.'[34] In Lohenstein, possibly, the later generation of Romantics finds its closest typological counterpart.

## 5. Closure Formalized: Neo-Classicism

In the French, German and English serious drama of the later seventeenth century and the greater part of the eighteenth, the conventions of tragic closure are increasingly formalized and ossified. In his comprehensive overview of the theory and practice of French classicist closure, which may, in light of the common classical heritage, be applied in a comparative perspective, Jacques Scherer notes the predominence of three rules: 'que le dénouement doit etre . . . nécessaire, complet et rapide.'[35] The condition of the unity of action dictates that of necessity, meaning that the outcome should evolve logically from the events of the plot, thereby avoiding the scorned deus ex machina. As D'Aubignac specifies in his Pratique du théâtre (1657), the story must also be complete: 'Il faut . . . prendre garde que la catastrophe achève pleinement le poème dramatique, c'est à dire qu'il ne reste rien après, ou de ce que les spectateurs doivent savoir ou qu'ils veuillent entendre . . . .'[36] This point, as Scherer observes, is so far exaggerated in practice that Corneille was inspired to mockery in his Suite du menteur, where he takes pains to detail the fate of a horse who has lost his master.[37] The rule of rapidity is the most frequently broken, as revealed by the variations in the length of any two given dramatic endings. For instance, the ending of Montchrestien's Hector (1604), following the Messenger's report, consists of 133 lines, and that of Racine's Phèdre (1677), of only 59. Rapidity demands, rather, that no peripheral or superfluous discourse and action should be incorporated, or, in short, that the sharpness of focus be maintained.

While the above rules are articulated in theory and often borne out in practice, other traditions derive largely from stage usage: for instance, that of the assembly of the main characters on the stage before the falling of the curtain. This custom, it may be conjectured, precurses the tableau as developed in the theory of Diderot and employed, with some differences, by the Romantics.[38] Once again, however, this tradition imposes a static quality upon closure, indicating that action has ended and that theatrical illusion has dispersed.

Paradoxically, borderline texts, which reveal a movement from one set of conventions toward another, may be more eloquent in delineating literary-historical developments than those in which the convention is already at its height. For this reason, Corneille's Le Cid (1636-7), a mixture of baroque and neo-classical traits, provides a particularly fruitful closural study. While Darnell Roaten interprets the drama primarily as an instance of baroque style and ethos, whereby the 'need for contrast and emotional tension' is paramount, and three out of five different plots converge to 'undergo the dense unification typical of the Baroque theatre,'[39] the progression of the intrigue reveals more baroque characteristics than the basically neo-classical ending. With the introductory motif--the entry of Don Sanche to offer his sword to Chimene--tension does indeed continue to waver in a baroque manner, first with the misconception that Rodrigue has been defeated, and then with the revival, upon the hero's entry, of the love-honour conflict as he forces Chimène to choose between forgiveness and vengeance: 'Ma tête est à vos pieds.[40] At this point, however, conflict has already been smoothed over by rational means. A superior force in the form of Don Fernand, who acts not only in the capacity of the kingly voice of God on earth, but also in a rational role as the analyst and mediator of conflict, has already decreed that the debts of honour and duty have been vindicated. The outcome is therefore eminently logical: if Rodrigue is indeed indispensable to the State, he is also worthy of the heroine's hand. No sooner has Chimène voiced this conclusion, thereby fixing the stability of the final situation, than Don Fernand provides the 'summing up,' followed by a brief response from Rodrigue. The conflicts of the past, the ruler repeats, may now be resolved legitimately; Rodrigue's future military exploits will further serve the state, and, while lingering obstacles to the marriage may persist, 'le temps, ta vaillance et ton roi' (C I [V, vii]) will remove them. Past, present, and future are thus linked in harmonious equilibrium, and religious, personal and political objectives have coincided.

Le Cid, it must be noted, is designated a tragi-comédie, therefore, a drama in which potential tragedy is averted; hence the absence of tempered grief in the ending. Corneille's other serious dramas, with the exception of Medée (1635), come to pronouncedly stable, resolved and static conclusions. In spite of baroque characteristics in plot and imagery, therefore, the closural structure has moved toward Neo-classicism. As Pierre Larthomas describes, his dramas close with 'une sorte d'apaisement grandiose,' whereby the fate of each survivor is indicated.[41]

Larthomas contrasts the Corneillian ending with those of Racine, which 'paraîssent extraordinairement variés.'[42] Here, he maintains, despair, separation, a final death, fear and madness are motifs which tend to prolong the action and rupture the calm. Some exception may, however, be taken to the above generalization. Although, for instance, Atalide's suicide concludes Bajazet (1672), her preceding words have stabilized the final situation by offering a rational justification for her action, and a resolution of the antitheses of love and violence. The foregoing statements of Osmin and Acomat have,mmoreover, already served as sequel and commentary: in one deft phrase, 'puisque c'en est fait, seigneur, songeons à nous,'[43] Osmin has shifted the perspective to the immediate task of rebuilding the present and the future, while Acomat has continued the former's eulogy of the dead Bajazet. The decision to depart immediately further distances the recent tragic events from the present and future.

Of Racine's Britannicus (1669) Larthomas points out, 'La crainte d'Agrippine prolonge la pièce, en laissant pressentir d'autres forfaits.'[44] Irony is indeed inherent in her hope that her son will change his ways, as in Burrhus's prayer that Nero's crimes are now over; the futility of these hopes would, to a cultured Racinian audience, have been amply clear. Concurrently, however, the expression of the two desiderata as positive hopes yet implies a conventional mitigation of tragic despair. The ending of Andromaque (1672), where Oreste is overcome by mad fury and Pylade implores him to depart, is even more dynamic. Once more, nevertheless, the closing speech of Pylade, with its decisive 'Sauvons-le,' and its determination to replace 'sa rage' (Oreste's) with 'ses sens' tends to reinstate equilibrium. Common classical knowledge that Oreste is, according to the mythical cycle, indeed saved, and survives to achieve purification at the Temple of Minerva, contributes to the hidden stability of the outcome. In yet another aspect, the ending of Andromaque affords significant insights into neo-classical closure practice. Larthomas' incisive study of the role of language in drama criticizes the 'tristement célèbres' lines of Racine's ending, claiming that these leave us 'plus étonnés qu'émus' by reason of their peculiar silence. Larthomas marvels at the lack of background noise, arrivals, and departures, considering that the scene is indeed full of turmoil, and maintains that the situation and not the text should be played in the theatre.[45] Two factors may, however, explain this static silence: first, that stage directions are seldom employed before the late eighteenth century, and second, that Racine is obeying the conventional demands of serious dramatic closure. Although the content does not lend itself to the structure, an attempt is made, with the resolutely calming final words of Pylade, to ensure a measure of equilibrium and continuity. Silence and restraint are integral to the closing tone.

By way of summary, the ending of Racine's Athalie (1690) may serve as an example par excellence of what emerges in the development of serious drama as a 'traditional ending,' once it has settled solidly within the contours of an expected--and sometimes, it may be conjectured, an unconsciously employed--norm. In the ending of this late seventeenth-century tragedy, tension is fully resolved, and both the religious and the secular order are reaffirmed.

> Par cette fin terrible, et due à ses forfaits,
> Apprenez, roi des Juifs, et n'oubliez jamais
> Que les rois dans le ciel ont un juge sévère,
> L'innocence un vengeur, et l'orphelin un père.
> (V, viii, p. 304)

Racine's Athalie reveals a masterful command of the conventions of traditional closure voiced in resounding but tranquil cadences. In carefully-measured, concise stages, the ending exhibits a winding-down of action and a movement from a partial to a collective focus.

The patterns of structure and content outlined in this overview, and gathered together with such finesse by Racine in Athalie, provide the background against which the innovations of the Romantic Movement may be viewed in their full significance, as a series of radical changes which redirect the structures and functions of dramatic closure from the nineteenth century to the modern age. Naturally, these transformations are not the product of a deus ex machina action, but are already precipitated in part throughout dramatic history, especially in the Baroque Era. The innovations, even as they become established, are marked by a forward-and-back wavering between tradition and innovation. Nevertheless, a major shift of ethos and function, set within the contours of new structures, will be seen to emerge.

## NOTES

[1] 'Die Struktur des Tragödienschlusses,' in Die Bauformen der griechischen Tragödie, ed. Walter Jens, Beihefte zu Poetica, 6 (München: Fink, 1971), p. 131.

[2] Oedipus the King, trans. David Grene, in Sophocles I: The Complete Greek Tragedies, ed. David Grene and Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 78.

[3] Thanks are due to M.V. Dimić (Univ. of Alberta) for pointing out the opposition between the formal textual ending and the awareness of resumed conflict. On the 'completeness' of the component dramas of the classical trilogy, see, among others, Horst Steinmetz, Die Trilogie: Entstehung und Struktur einer Großform, Probleme der Dichtung, 2 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1968), esp. pp. 1-33.

[4] Oedipus at Colonus, trans. Robert Fitzgerald, in Sophocles I, p. 159.

[5] Antigone, trans. Elizabeth Wyckhoff, in Sophocles I, p. 208.

[6] Francis Fergusson, The Idea of a Theater. A Study of Ten Plays. The Art of Drama in Changing Perspective (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949, rpt. 1972), p. 28.

[7] Fergusson, p. 29.

[8] The translation used is that of William Arrowsmith in Euripides IV, The Complete Greek Tragedies, ed. David Grene and Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

[9] Castelvetro's Theory of Poetry, trans. and ed. H.B. Charlton (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1913), p. 99.

[10] Eckard Lefèvre, 'Senecas Tragödien,' in Der Einfluß Senecas auf das europäische Drama, ed. Eckard Lefèvre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 1.

[11] See Lefèvre, 'Senecas Tragödien,' pp. 1-11.

[12] See Seneca's Tragedies, with an English Translation, ed. and trans. F.J. Miller (London: Heinemann, 1929), II, p. 93. This version is useful in its juxtaposition of the Latin and the English texts, but does not always read smoothly. A freer but more elegant translation is that of E.F. Watling, Seneca: Four Tragedies and Octavia (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966),

[13] Glynne Wickham, The Medieval Theatre (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974), p. 34. See also E.K. Chambers' aged but frequently-cited work, The Medieval Stage, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1903), and O.B. Hardison Jr., Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965). I am grateful to Dr. E.D. Blodgett (University of Alberta) for having read and discussed with me the section on the medieval drama.

[14] See Wickham, The Medieval Theatre, pp. 39-41.

[15] See Wickham, p. 74.

[16] Everyman in Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy, ed. R. Ornstein and H. Spencer (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1964), pp. 251-64.

[17] Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française, 17th ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1922), p. 414.

[18] Darnell Roaten, Structural Forms in the French Theatre, 1500-1700 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), p. 32.

[19] Roaten, p. 32.

[20] The edition used for Montchrestien's Hector and for all French plays discussed in this section, unless otherwise indicated, is Le Théâtre du XVII$^{e}$ siecle, ed. Jacques Scherer, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), pp. 5-84.

[21] Shakespeare's Complete Works, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn, 1936) have been used throughout. The citation is from Julius Caesar, V, iv.

[22] Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus in Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy, V, ii, p. 73.

[23] John Webster, The White Devil, in Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy, V, vi, p. 172.

[24] Théophile de Viau, *Amours tragiques de Pyrame et Thisbe* in *Le Theatre du XVII$^{e}$ siecle*, p. 284.

[25] Lope da Vega, *Fuente Ovejuna*, trans Roy Campbell, in *Six Spanish Plays*, Vol. 3 of *The Classic Theatre*, ed. Eric Bentley (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), p. 231.

[26] Edwin Honig, 'Introduction,' *Calderón de la Barca: Four Plays*, trans. Edwin Honig, Mermaid Drama Books (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. xix.

[27] Calderon, *La devoción de la cruz*, in *Calderón de la Barca: Four Plays*, p. 139.

[28] Harald Steinhagen, *Wirklichkeit und Handeln im barocken Drama. Historisch-ästhetische Studien zum Trauerspiel des Andreas Gryphius* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977), p. 221.

[29] Andreas Gryphius, *Trauerspiele*, ed. Hugh Powell, Vol. 2 of the *Gesamtausgabe der deutschsprachigen Werke*, ed. M. Szyrocki and Hugh Powell, Neudrucke Deutscher Literaturwerke, N.F., 15 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1966), V, p. 75.

[30] Steinhagen, p. 345.

[31] Gerald Gillespie, 'Lohenstein's Protagonists,' *Germanic Review* 39 (1964), pp. 101-2.

[32] Willi Flemming, 'Einführung,' in *Barockdrama I: Das Schlesische Kunstdrama*, ed. Willi Flemming, 2nd ed. (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), p. 50.

[33] Lohenstein, *Sophonisbe*, in *Barockdrama*, I (V), p. 314, ll. 487--94.

[34] Gillespie, 'Lohenstein's Protagonists,' p. 117.

[35] Jacques Scherer, *La Dramaturgie classique en France* (Paris: Nizet, 1950), p. 128.

[36] D'Aubignac, cited by Scherer, p. 131.

[37] Scherer, p. 132.

[38] Diderot's concept of the tableau is discussed in the next chapter.

[39] Roaten, p. 144, 138.

[40] Pierre Corneille, Le Cid in Théâtre complet, ed. Pierre Lièvre (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), I (V, vii).

[41] Pierre Larthomas, Le Langage dramatique: Sa nature, ses procédés (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972, rpt. 1980), p. 128.

[42] Larthomas, p. 128.

[43] Jean Racine, Bajazet in Oeuvres complètes, ed. Pierre Clarac (Paris: Seuil, 1962), V, xi.

[44] Larthomas, p. 128.

[45] Larthomas, pp. 128-9.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The Eighteenth Century: Precursors of Change

As the eighteenth century progresses, the traditional forms of drama are under frequent attack in England, France and the German states. Even so renowned an Enlightenment critic as Samuel Johnson comments on the decline of tragedy, 'crush'd by Rules, and weaken'd as refined.'[1] The uninspired observance of the unities in Addison's Cato (wr. 1703, perf. 1713) attracts the jibes of John Dennis. Addison, he maintains, causes absurdities to abound in his tragedy 'from the indiscreet and injudicious observance of some of the Rules of Aristotle;' at the same time, the play suffers from the neglect of other rules, such as the creation of tension and the excitement of interest. Dennis concludes: 'I sit with indolence from the opening of the play to the very catastrophe; and when at length the catastrophe comes, instead of vehemently shaking with terror or dissolving with melting pity, I rather burn with indignation and I shudder with horror.'[2]

Although polemical pronouncements on the need for dramatic innovation remain scattered, among the British the theory and practice of Richardson in the novel and Lillo in the drama are to reinforce the currents of change both at home and abroad. Paradoxically, the spread of Shakespeare idolatry coincides with a widening rift between the popular or 'subliterary' drama and its 'elite' forms.

Of the three groups on which our study focuses, the German drama is the least developed into a native tradition at the turn of the century. In a multitude of principalities united only by a common language which is, in turn, further subdivided by regional differences of vocabulary, pronunciation and idioms, no homogenous German dramatic tradition presided over by one or more established theatres has yet come to exist. Private entertainers and opera companies continue to provide diversion for the courts, while wandering troupes offer informal entertainment along the lines of the commedia dell'arte and popular folk materials.[3] French Neoclassicism and Enlightenment find their staunchest defender in Gottsched who, in an attempt to refine German standards of taste, compiles his Die deutsche Schaubühne, nach den Regeln der alten Griechen und Römer eingerichtet (1740-45). While the first three volumes of this anthology are chiefly translations or adaptations from French Neoclassicism, with the exception of Cato, Volumes Four to Six nevertheless contain original German dramas.[4]

The second half of the century is, however, a period of dynamic change in German theory and practice. The criticism of Lessing, Herder, Lenz, Goethe and Schiller, among others, marks a movement away from the epigonal imitation of French models and an attempt to fuse the forms and content of tragedy and comedy. Lessing's statement of 1754 is indicative of the current of innovation: 'Dort [zu unsern Zeiten] glaubte man, daß die Welt lange genug in dem Lustspiele gelacht und abgeschmackte Laster ausgezischt habe; man kam also auf den Einfall, die Welt endlich einmal auch darinne weinen und an stillen Tugenden ein edles Vergnügen finden zu lassen.'[5] As early as in his contributions to the Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend (1759-65), and later, in his Hamburgische Dramaturgie (1767-69), begun on the occasion of his appointment to the National Theatre in Hamburg, Lessing argues that the French have taken over merely the outward forms of the Attic drama and annexed to it their own standards of urbane culture. The tragedy must, he maintains, be revived by the spirit of ancient Greek tragedy, as well as by the example of Shakespeare.[6]

The condemnation of the contemporary theatre is the most marked in France, for the very reason that, among the Neoclassicists, dramatic convention has imbedded itself to an immobilizing degree, more thoroughly than among the English or German states. One vigorously iconoclastic attack on traditional forms and content is launched by Sébastien Mercier in his Essai sur l'art dramatique (1773):

> Tous les héros marcherent à grands pas, leverent leurs têtes ornées d'un panache flottant, furent roides & tendus; ils parlerent, ou plutôt ils mugirent par la farbacane du poète: ils furent outrés dans leur fierté comme dans leur idiome. Mais ce n'étoit pas là ce qui devoit encore le plus révolter: bientôt le poëte ne conçut rien de plus agréable que la grandeur illimitée ou l'autorité d'un monarque . . .
>
> L'organisation des pièces fut aussi fausse. Que de faits sans vraisemblance & (ce qui est non plus incroyable mais plus choquant) sans conformité avec le caractere du personnage! On s'asservit scrupuleusement à l'unité de tems + de lieu, qui à la rigueur pouvoient obtenir quelques exceptions; + l'on nous présenta des irregularités bizarres, des monstres d'imagination, qui n'avoient jamais pu exister, même à l'aide des faits controuvés.[7]

Similar objections, although expressed with somewhat less idiosyncratic verve, are voiced throughout the century by other French critics, including Grimm, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau.[8]

The changes in the subject matter and sensibility of drama in the later eighteenth century and their effects on the structure and functions of closure should, however, be viewed from a socio-historical as well as aesthetic perspective. The eighteenth century marks a crisis in European life-style, philosophy, society and politics. Gradually the foundations of the well-ordered, determinist world of Leibnitz and Locke begin to crumble. The view of the universe as a demonstration of Divine Reason in its orderly functioning is controverted as social, political and philosophical upheavals culminate in the chaos of the French Revolution. The effects of these changes are highlighted in the domestic drama which, as Arnold Hauser points out, 'deliberately and methodically' sets itself in opposition to classical tragedy, to become 'the mouthpiece of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.'[9] The bourgeois drama of the later eighteenth century reflects the unsettling of the feudally-based social order as an increasingly prominent middle class emerges. According to Hauser, 'The middle-class drama implied from the very outset the relativizing and belittling of the heroic and artistic values and was in itself an advertisement for bourgeois morality and the middle-class claim to equality of rights.'[10] Although all dramas of the era do not reveal the degree of polemicism suggested by the Marxist-inspired Hauser (e.g. Lessing's Miss Sara Sampson [1755] and Home's Douglas [1756]), social conflicts on many levels do indeed constitute a major dramatic theme.

The interdependence of subject matter, ethos and structure is convincingly affirmed by the evolution of dramatic closure in the later eighteenth century. Serious drama (including such appellations as 'bourgeois drama,' 'middle-class drama,' 'sentimentalist,' 'revolutionary,' Sturm und Drang, comédie larmoyante, weinerliches Lustspiel, and 'pre-romantic') reveals one dominant closural tendency: the stability incorporated in the traditional ending is no longer a given factor. The termination of the intrigue does not indicate necessarily a return to a ready-made or innate order. Harmony is less frequently found within the contours of an already-existing socio-political system, but rather, is transposed into the future. On earth, the application of moral principles will, it is often hoped, bring about ideal conditions while, on a transcendent level, man may be assured of eventual justice and reconciliation through God. The heile Welt is now no longer seen as an existing entity, but as a goal still to be attained. To some extent, this content is reminiscent of the commentary in medieval and early renaissance drama, where direct moral admonition, as noted in our preceding chapter, also predominates. In isolated instances of eighteenth-century drama, even this consolation is lacking.

Innovative tendencies thus emerge in the closure practice of the eighteenth century. What we have here designated the 'didactic-affective' ending is the most widespread. This structure evinces an outpouring of sentiment which is not appreciably lessened at the end of the drama, and may even, in the final moments, rise to new heights. Interlinked with the particularly tearful emphasis are strongly-reinforced didactic statements. Structurally sequel and commentary are interwoven. The drama no longer moves to the end of the action with the establishment of a final situation, to be succeeded by a relatively detached, meditative commentary or 'summing up.' Rather, the moralistic teaching is constantly reiterated side-by-side with expressions of feeling. The receiver-directed aspects of the ending are evident, to the point that the audience is even directly addressed in Lillo's The London Merchant (1731).[11] In spite of the overwhelming didacticism of the ending, it no longer incorporates a return to the type of harmony and equilibrium visible in a Shakespearean tragedy. Although man is exhorted to strive for morality and justice, and the protagonist is fully reconciled with the justice of his fate, the outcome stresses the precarious balance between rightful conduct and evil-doing.

George Lillo's early bourgeois drama The London Merchant represents one of the earliest instances of didactic-affective closure. In the preface, the author states, 'Plays founded on moral tales in private life may be of admirable use by carrying conviction to the mind with such irresistible force as to engage all the faculties and powers of the soul in the cause of virtue by stifling vice in its first principles.'[12] The aims of persuasion and instruction by means of example and sentiment are emphatically incorporated into the ending, which drives home the 'message' of the work.

The entire fifth act constitutes, in effect, the ending of Lillo's drama. At the close of the fourth act, Barnwell and Millwood have been seized and are awaiting trial. With their sentencing and execution, the sequel is complete and the final situation established. Although no further complications emerge, the pace of the closing act is yet slow as all events are weighed and probed for their sentimental and didactic significance. In slow and lurid detail the hero's pangs of remorse and the grief of his friends are presented. Evident attempts are made to sweep up the audience into a common learning experience by means of sentiment, as when Barnwell, in his address from the scaffold, points at the spectators, warning them against the imitation of the errors he has committed. The communal form of address continues when Trueman, using the first person plural, repeats the pleas for compassion and virtue which have infused the entire ending.

The development of the sentimental novel throws further light on the crucial role of the ending in eighteenth-century narrative. In the postscript (1748) to Clarissa, Richardson attacks the convention of the happy ending. A positive resolution, he claims, is false on three counts: first, it is not true to life; second, it undermines the author's didactic intentions; and third, it goes contrary to religious precepts, which demand that reward should be granted in Heaven and not on earth. Only when the writer creates 'true objects of pity' can he transmit his didactic purposes to his audience.[14] With Richardson as with Lillo, therefore, the view of the ending focuses on exhortation and sentimental appeal to the emotions of the receivers. At the same time, the ending no longer represents a present state of harmony but points the way to future justice and happiness.

The above two elements--the absense of immediate fulfillment and the prospect of heavenly reconciliation in the future--recur, either singly or together, in a large number of eighteenth-century dramas, while in others, grief, loss and lack of resolution are signalled. Lessing's Miss Sara Sampson (1755), for instance, combines affective elements with less self-consciously applied didacticism than Lillo's work. More than The London Merchant, the German drama poses double-edged questions on the possibility of true justice on earth, and suggests obliquely that generosity, mercy and innocence are made the victims of raw power. Even the values of virtue and family honour are seen in a relativistic light. Sara, although in her own words 'eine schuldige, eine reuende, eine gestrafte Tochter,'[15] yet emerges as someone to be pitied, a heroine whose faults and sins stem from a superabundance of love and innocence. Furthermore, her father, Sir William, admits that moral judgement divorced from mercy is a grave fault of which he has been guilty.[16] As in Lillo's play, the ending of Miss Sara Sampson suggests that only heaven can right the evils of earth. Meanwhile, the daily struggle of generosity and self-abnegation continues for the living. In an abrupt shift from the sentimental tone of the preceding scenes and the sustained emotionalism of Lillo's ending, the final development of Lessing's work introduces a new motif. Mastering his grief, Sir William determines to set out on the rescue of the abandoned child of Sara's dead lover and his former mistress, the escaped murderess of the heroine. This final appendage of a dynamic motif marks an important departure from conventional closure practice. The static elements of the ending are thereby ruptured, and the focus shifts to the continuation of an active struggle against corruption. In this way, a dynamic motif takes over the forward-directing and calming function of the commentary in earlier closure.

Only one year after the innovations of Lessing upon the models of the didactic-affective ending developed by British Sentimentalism, yet another development occurs in France. In the theory and practice of Diderot, the stage itself is made the focus of dynamically intermingling visual elements. In the forerunners of the romantic 'tableau' ending, pantomime, gesture and the grouping of characters add new force to the final situation. Although the assembly of characters on the stage at the end of a piece for the concluding bow is customary practice, the rhetoric of drama, suggests Diderot, does not render fully 'le ton de la nature' or 'la vérité' of the situation.[17] A montage of visual components can, he maintains, render the full multi-faceted significance of an event or emotion and create, in effect, a stage 'painting.' Diderot's fictive dialogue partner Dorval sketches one such tableau which, although not introduced specifically as a closing scene, yet could serve as the end of a narrative sequence. A peasant woman has, Dorval recounts, travelled to a neighboring village, only to be recalled by the violent death of her husband.

> J'y vis un tableau, et j'y entendais un discours que je n'ai point oublié. Le mort était étendu sur un lit. Ses jambes nues pendaient hors du lit. Sa femme échevelée était à terre. Elle tenait les pieds de son mari; et elle disait en fondant en larmes, et avec une action qui en arrachait à tout le monde: 'Hélas! quand je t'envoyai ici, je ne pensais pas que tes pieds te menaient à la mort.'[18]

The articulation of emotion is in itself negligible, Dorval suggests: 'Presque tous les hommes parlent bien en mourant.'[19] Silence is more articulate than words: 'Nous parlons trop dans nos drames; et, conséquemment, nos acteurs ne jouent pas assez.'[20] Although speech inevitably must be combined with pantomime, its nature, in times of extreme emotion, is fragmentary, for 'ce qui émeut toujours, ce sont des cris, des mots inarticulés, des voix rompus.'[21]

In essence, Diderot argues for a stage which vibrates from every corner with energy and motion. While in one sense, a greater realism of portrayal is called for, the devaluation of rhetoric for the sake of inarticulate cries and gestures focuses on the suggestive, evocative potential of theatre. The extent to which theory modifies conventional closure practice is illustrated by the ending of Le Fils naturel (1757), the drama which inspires the Entretiens. Here, in the joyful resolution, family members utter fragmentary phrases, at times scarcely audible, and embrace each other and their new-found father in transports of happiness and gratitude. Yet another twist, which suggests the fusion of life and theatre, and even implies that the drama which bases itself upon real people and experiences can come to no definitive ending, superimposes itself upon the core text in the form of a narrator's 'postface.' In the interval between the events which have inspired the family's commemorative drama and the actual staging, Lysimond, the father, has died. At the sight of the servant playing the role of the dead father, grief is reactivated. A new 'tableau' of tears replaces that of happy reunion: 'La douleur . . . devint générale, et la pièce ne finit pas.'[22] This 'second ending'--a non-ending of sorts--raises the conjecture that the boundaries between the stage and life, or between the narrative segment which ends the dramatic text and the life that continues beyond the apparent ending, are indeed fluid.

Yet another instance of tableau closure occurs in Diderot's Le Père de famille (1758). The final situation in this drama comes about through the arrival of the runaway children, the clarification of previous misunderstandings, and the reconciliation of the family members. Once harmony is re-established in the sequel, the father pronounces the commentary: the foregoing events, he observes, have taught that violent passions must be controlled, and submission, docility, and patience cultivated.[23] This static, moralistic ending is yet modified by another feature, which imparts a renewed rise of intensity and feeling. A tableau, involving all members of the household, ensues as the characters cling to each other or mill about, 'et tous marquent le transport de joie.'[24]

Other examples of endings with tableau scenes are found in French dramas of the later eighteenth century. In Sedaine's *Le Philosophe sans le savoir* (1765), a shifting series of mini-tableaux is interspersed with scraps of dialogue. Maréchal'e revolutionary drama satirising the rapacity of monarchs, *Le Jugement dernier des rois* (1793), provides a remarkable instance of a tableau which concurrently serves as the final dynamic motif. In this ending, a stage spectacle entirely replaces dialogue, and the climactic action of a massive explosion represents both the ending and the culminating event of the drama:

> Le volcan commence son éruption: il jette sur le théâtre des pierres, des charbons brûlants . . . etc.
> L'explosion se fait: le feu assiège les rois de toutes parts; ils tombent, consumés, dans les entrailles de la terre entrouverte.[25]

In this drama, several years before the melodrama has been reshaped and popularized by Pixérécourt, and decades before the Romantic Movement is to make its most decisive mark on the French stage, a prominent closural structure of the nineteenth century has already been introduced.

The tableau ending is not confined to eighteenth-century France, but also begins to emerge in the German drama of the same era. Leisewitz's *Julius von Tarent* (1776), Klinger's *Die Zwillinge* and *Sturm und Drang* (1776), and Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1781) and *Die Verschwörung des*

Fiesco zu Genua (1783) all employ, sometimes in combination with other closural structures, tableaux which either fix and hold emotional expressions, or terminate the play dynamically with an outburst of wordless action. Somewhat rarer than in German Sturm und Drang drama, the tableau still appears on the British stage of the later eighteenth century in plays such as Frederic Reynolds' adaptation of Goethe's Werther (Werter, perf. 1785, pr. 1786) and Mary Robinson's The Sicilian Lover (1796), which also, well before the first so-called British 'melodrama' is staged, make use of music to reinforce the bereavement of the final scene.

As the eighteenth century continues, the dramatic ending imparts less and less harmony to the final situation. The didactic-affective endings of The London Merchant and Miss Sara Sampson have, as mentioned above, tended to view reconciliation as a future or transcendent development. This idea is further developed in Lessing's Emilia Galotti (1772), where the corrupt forces of political power crush the private citizen. Paradoxically, only an action punishable by law can rescue virtue from corruption. Galotti, forced to murder his daughter in order to save her from forcible seduction at the hands of the Prinz von Guastalla, can only look to the intervention of Godly justice in the afterlife to right the mockery of justice on earth. Similarly, Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen (1773), while more hopeful about future reform of the worldly order, also situates harmony with God and Heaven. The ending of Schiller's Die Räuber is more ambivalent. The hero Karl Moor reconciles himself, in an abrupt decision, with the social order, determining to turn himself in to justice. This final conformity does little, however, to remedy the predominant sense of total loss, and is, in spite of Karl's decision to thereby aid a starving peasant family, essentially a suicidal gesture. A sense of the circular course of history overhangs the pseudo-order achieved in the final scene of Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua. A tyrant, Andrea Doria, has been deposed in a republican uprising. Fiesco, the erstwhile leader of the republican cause, soon betrays his trust to become an even more dangerous tyrant than the previous. In an action he regards necessary to the state, Verrina, a former republican, drowns the hero, only to join the enemy camp which has reinstated Doria. Government thus wavers between two evils, and no ideal solution, either real or transcendent, is offered. Reconciliation has become resignation.

Other eighteenth-century dramas end in unalleviated darkness. One early example of a 'black' ending is visible in John Home's Douglas (1756), a family tragedy in a historical setting. Although the ending establishes a final situation, and explication unveils the intricacies of hidden identities and relationships, grief is unmitigated. In the closing commentary, Lord Randolph delegates funeral services to the dead. His following words, however, break from the Shakespearean model. 'Peace in this world I never can enjoy,' he mourns, and resolves to seek out death in battle.[26] A similarly bleak picture concludes Jean François de la Harpe's Mélanie (1770), of which Jacques Truchet comments that the ending marks 'une évolution dans la direction du drame noir.'[27]

The German Sturm und Drang drama affords us, however, the greatest number of endings of loss and fragmentation, a tendency which here, as in the proliferation of German examples above, supports the thesis that little separates this movement from Romanticism. One elaborate inversion and virtual undoing of the convention of the 'happy ending' is found in Jakob Lenz's Die Soldaten (1776). The fourth scene of the final act concludes with a tableau depicting the pitiful reunion of the heroine Marie, now a decrepit beggar-woman and prostitute, with her father. As if to suggest that no true reconciliation can come about in an unjust and inequitable society, the final scene ironically undercuts the previous. Sanctimoniously the Obrist Graf von Spannheim proposes that a system of glorified prostitution should be devised, whereby certain women willingly make themselves martyrs of the state to gratify the sexual appetites of soldiers. This situation indeed already exists, and needs no official sanction. Women like Marie have suffered and will continue to suffer the consequences, the ending obliquely emphasizes.[28]

In Leisewitz's Julius von Tarent, royalty once more is the site of domestic tragedy. The Furst von Tarent, having murdered his younger son to avenge the death of the elder, determines to transform the remainder of his life into a memento mori of unalleviated grief, and to hand over his state to the harsh rule of Naples.[29] In this way, neither religious faith nor renewed social stability mitigate the bleakness of the final situation. Similarly, Klinger's Die Zwillinge is based on sibling rivalry which ends in murder. Here again the father is forced to play executioner, avenging the death of the elder twin by stabbing the younger. The drama terminates with a dynamic motif as, wielding the dagger at his son, the father cries: 'Der

Blutige ruft Rache!--, . . . leben im Jammer verwaist.'[30] Even more tensely bursting with action is the non-ending of Heinrich Leopold Wagner's Die Kindsmörderin (1777), where the heroine, on the verge of execution, is the object of frantic plans for a last-minute rescue. This highly unresolved, dynamic ending, an anomaly in European closure practice of the eighteenth century and even unusual in the context of Sturm und Drang drama, resembles that of another work, Goethe's posthumously-published 'Ur-Faust' (wr. c. 1775).

The early manuscript of Faust I is easily overlooked in an overview of Sturm und Drang drama, for, circulated privately in Goethe's social circle, it survives only in the handwritten copy made by Luise von Gochhausen on the basis of the author's version. The manuscript, discovered in 1887, serves to situate the eventual Faust-drama in its true historical setting along with Faust, ein Fragment (pr. 1790). The problems of 'closure' are, in this instance, indeed complex; whether a 'fragment' can be said to 'end' is debatable. Two factors, however, argue for its inclusion in the present study: first, the closing scene of the 'Ur-Faust' parallels that of the later Faust I, the first component of a two-part drama; and second, as a type of Bildungsdrama, it marks not only the close of a stage in the life of the protagonist, but also, in the philosophical and aesthetic development of Goethe.

The structure of the fragment is that of a series of episodic spotlights focusing on the protagonist's character and actions at various points in time and space. The ending represents the last and most critical stage in this development. Faust shares the Titanism of the Sturm und Drang hero who, in his drive for infinite knowledge and experience, sweeps aside the conventional boundaries of morality and upright conduct in a whirlwind Odyssey, of which the Gretchen episode forms the most cohesive unit.

Faust's final experience in the eighteenth-century fragment thus serves as a terrifying, sobering halt to his anarchical quest. It does not, however, lead to a prefiguration of his eventual salvation. Devoid of 'Vorspiel' and 'Prolog,' the final situation emerges starkly, representing the 'Reue nach der Tat' of a rash action, accompanied by a frantic rescue attempt. The secular focus of the previous episodes, where no 'dare' has been voiced between God and Mephistopheles, and where the devil himself plays merely the role of an obliging cohort, does not create a transcendent context for the ending. Gretchen's salvation thus is a somewhat whimsical development, and only her words 'Wir sehen uns wieder!' carry the suggestion of an afterlife of redemption for the distraught hero.[31]

The foregoing overview indicates that the eighteenth century has made great strides toward the undoing of closural conventions in the French, German and English drama. Similar harbingers of change may be identified in language groups outside our main area of emphasis. Italian literature, for instance, parallels the general weakening of conventional norms. While Goldoni remains within the confines of traditional practice in his serious dramas (Pamela nubile and Il vero amico, 1750;[32] Gl'innamorati, 1759), the tragedeian Vittorio Alfieri, in his determination to counteract the dull elegance of Metastasio, frequently makes use of active, abrupt endings. Saul (perf. 1782), for example, concludes with the flight of the royal family and a dynamic tableau depicting the King, fallen on his sword, surrounded by an onrush of shouting Philistines.[33] *Bruto Primo* (1787) ends not only in a tableau of the hero's son facing imminent death, but in an antithetical statement opposing Brutus's private misery with his public glory; the implication, however, remains that the demands of the state transcend those of the individual.

Of special precursory importance is Carlo Gozzi, a comedian greatly admired by Schiller, Tieck and E.T.A. Hoffmann. In an attempt to counteract, by means of the *commedia dell'arte*, the rampant 'pleurnicherie' of the *comédie larmoyante*, Gozzi's *Fabile* make use of masks, abrupt changes of identity, improvisation, and whirlwind shifts in plot.[34] His dramatic endings, although marked by full exposition, the punishment of the villain, and the promise of a happy future for all, nevertheless emerge suddenly and whimsically. Baroque closural structure is paralleled by a parting compliment to the audience, whereby the actor drops his stage role, as in *Il Re Cervo* and *Turandot*. Other endings serve to tantalize and puzzle the receiver: *Il Corvo*, for instance, plays upon the redundant concept of 'false illusion' in a series of surprise developments.[35] The heroine Zobéide is, in the drama of the same title, left in dismay after a staggering series of last-minute metamorphoses, somewhat like Kleist's Alkmene.

The picture of closure is somewhat different in Spain, where more than a century of decadence has inspired a self-conscious adherence to the Enlightenment principles of faith in reason, virtue, and a conservative view of socio-political stability.[36] Moratín, the foremost representative of the bourgeois dramatic tradition, demands special mention. His dramas adhere largely to the unities and conclude with the main characters' enlightenment concerning a social issue, reinforced by a summarizing didactic statement, as in El viejo y la nina (wr. c. 1786, perf. 1790) and El sí de las ninas (perf. 1806). It is of interest to note that the latter drama, although first performed in the nineteenth century, has a distinct sequel and commentary, while already in 1731 Lillo's London Merchant has interfused the two.

The Russian drama, unlike the Italian and more like the Spanish, still remains in large part within the confines of dramatic tradition. This may be explained at least partially by the delayed impact of Corneille, Racine, and Boileau's L'Art poétique, which began to make inroads into the Russian theatre only from the mid-eighteenth century onward.[37] A.P. Sumarokov, the major playwright of the period, borrows most of his plots from Russian history, but considers his prime object the introduction of the best works of the French classicist theatre to the Russian stage.[38] Adhering to the stipulations of Boileau, repeated in his own Epistle on Versification, he structures his tragedies strictly in accordance with neo-classical principles:

> The construction was subject to rigid rules, of which the first was the famous rule on the three unities and the division into five acts. The action is developed in a lofty heroic tone, completely eliminating the comic element. . . . The core of the tragic struggle is usually the conflict between reason and duty. . . and emotions. . . . Following the laws of literary didacticism, the tragic conflict must result in the triumph of virtue and the punishment of evil. This predetermines the outcome of the tragedy.[39]

With Fonvisin's The Minor (wr. c. 1760, perf. 1782), Russian drama moves toward the establishment of the 'drama' blending serious and comic elements. In this savage indictment of the vulgarity and bestiality of the country nobility, dialogue and gesture are maintained at a lively pace until the concluding line. The ending is, however, conventional, highlighted by justice and morality. The honest characters are rewarded and the wicket suitably abashed. The one-line commentary, 'These are the fruits of evil conduct,' reinforces the dicacticism of the outcome and the sense of well-ordered justice.[40]

## Conclusion

From the above overview of closural practice in the European drama of the eighteenth century, it is evident that, with the exception of the Spanish and Russian stages, the period from 1730 onward marks a gradual loosening of conventions. The question arises whether the domestic and pre-romantic drama should not be viewed as the definitive turning-point in the history of closural innovation. Two reasons, however, cause us to shift our focus forward to the Romantic Era. First, while the Sturm und Drang drama certainly marks a departure from post-Aristotelian closure practice, similar tendencies are not as deeply entrenched in the British and French drama of the same era; hence the preponderance of German examples in the present chapter. The virtually uninterrupted line leading from the drama of the late eighteenth century to that of Romanticism in Germany has led scholars such as Lilian Furst to suggest that the earlier movement should be regarded as the first stage of the later. Second, with the partial exception of Sturm und Drang dramas and those of Gozzi, the dramatic structures outlined above incicate more of a change in the subjects of drama and in socio-political awareness than a transformation in aesthetics. Reality is still viewed as absolute. The fragment has not yet become, except possibly with the 'Ur-Faust,' an aesthetic ideal in a universe where seeing is part of an ongoing creative process. The action of the drama, moreover, still moves in most instances from cause to effect. The universe--and again the Faust-fragment serves as a notable exception--is not yet seen as a riddling entity, infused with mysterious and inexplicable forces, just as the dramatic character, in spite of his individualistic posturings, still views himself within the context of society. The tableau, although it attempts to go beyond mere verbal expression, is still based on a mimetic concept of art, and its full symbolic, suggestive powers have not yet been realized. Dramatic closure in the final decades of the eighteenth century is still poised on the threshold of far greater changes to be driven to their fullest as the Romantic Movement gathers impetus.

## NOTES

[1] Samuel Johnson, *Poems*, ed. David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p.108.

[2] John Dennis, 'Remarks upon Addison's *Cato, A Tragedy*,' (1713) *in Dramatic Essays of the Neoclassic Age*, ed. H.H. Adams and Baxter Hathaway (Columbia, 1950; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 208.

[3] See Otto Mann, *Geschichte des deutschen Dramas*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Kroner, 1969), pp. 126-155. A useful overview, although details should be verified by other sources. An accurate and detailed history of theatrical theory with wide interlinguistic coverage is Marvin Carlson's recent *Theories of the Theatre* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984). This unfortunately appeared after the completion of the present study.

[4] My thanks are due to Dr. Alison Scott-Prelorentzos (Germanic Lanuages, Univ. of Alberta) for drawing my attention to the presence of original German dramas in this collection, a detail frequently overlooked by histories of the German drama.

[5] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in his 'Zur deutschen Sprache und Literature,' *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Wolfgang Stammler (Munchen: Hanser, 1959), I, p. 903. This title is presumably that of the editor, for it is not listed in Lessing bibliographies.

[6] Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, ed. Otto Mann, Kröners Taschenausgabe, 267 (Stuttgart: Kroner, 1958), esp. pp. 290-366; 388-97. See also Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, 'Briefe uber Merkwurdigkeiten der Literatur,' (1766-67), especially letters 14-18, 20, in *Sturm und Drang: Eine Auswahl theoretischer Texte*, ed. Erich Loewenthal (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1972), pp. 9-59; Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Über die neuere deutsche Literatur' (1766-67), in *Sturm und Drang*, pp. 185-287, and his 'Shakespeare' (1773), in *Sturm und Drang*, pp. 555-78; and Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 'Zum Shakespears Tag,' (1771), in *Sturm und Drang*, pp. 693-98.

[7] Mercier, *Du Théâtre, ou nouvel essai sur l'art dramatique* (Amsterdam, 1773; rpt. Genève: Slatkine, 1970), p. 30. The spelling and punctuation of the original edition has been followed in the citation.

[8] See Denis Diderot, *Les Bijoux indiscrets* (wr. 1747; pr. 1748) in *Diderot's Writings on the Theatre*, ed. F.C. Green (London: Cambridge, 1936), pp. 223-6;

and his *De la poésie dramatique* (1758) in his *Oeuvres esthétiques*, ed. P. Vernière (Paris: Garnier, 1968), pp. 183-287; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1760) in his *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), Pt. 2, no. 17; F.M.A. de Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), ed. R. Naves (1939; rpt. Paris: Garnier, 1954), pp. 63-4, and his 'Préface' to *Brutus* (1730) in his *Théâtre choisi*, ed. H. Legrand (Paris: Larousse, 1924), pp.306--27 ; and Fr. Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique*, ed. M. Tounaux (Paris: Garnier, 1877-82), esp. VI, janvier, septembre, octobre 1765.

[9] Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, trans. by the author and Stanley Goodman (New York: Vintage, 1957), III, p. 84.

[10] Hauser, p. 84.

[11] George Lillo, *The London Merchant* in *Six Eighteenth Century Plays*, ed. H.H. Wilson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 227-8 [V, ii].

[12] Lillo, 'Dedication' to *The London Merchant*, p. 183.

[13] Lillo, *The London Merchant* [V, ii], p. 228:

. . . we show
A human gen'rous sense of others' woe;
Unless we mark what drew their ruin on,
And by avoiding that, prevent our own.

[14] S. Richardson, 'Postscript' to *Clarissa*, in *Dramatic Essays of the Neoclassic Age*, p. 326.

[15] *Miss Sara Sampson* in Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke*, I [V, ix], p. 393.

[16] *Miss Sara Sampson*, I [V, ix], p. 393.

[17] Diderot, *Oeuvres esthétiques* ('Deuxième entretien'), p. 95, 96.

[18] Diderot, 'Deuxième entretien,' p. 99.

[19] 'Deuxième entretien,' p. 99.

[20] 'Deuxième entretien,' p. 100.

[21] Diderot, 'Deuxième entretien,' p. 100.

[22] Diderot, *Le Fils naturel* in *Théâtre du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Jacques Truchet, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), II, p. 55 [V,v].

[23] *Le Père de famille* in *Théâtre du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, II, pp. 140-41 [V, xii].

[24] *Le Père de famille*, p. 141 [V, xii].

[25] Maréchal, *Théâtre du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, II, p. 1325.

[26] *Douglas* in *Eighteenth Century Tragedy*, ed. Michael Booth (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 299.

[27] 'Notes' to *Mélanie*, in *Théâtre du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, II, p. 1490.

[28] Lenz, *Die Soldaten* in *Sturm und Drang: Dramatische Schriften*, ed. Erich Leowenthal and Lambert Schneider (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1972), I, pp. 331-2 [V,v].

[29] *Julius von Tarent* in *Sturm und Drang*, I, p. 613 [V, ix].

[30] *Die Zwillinge* in *Sturm und Drang*, I, p. 123 [V, ii].

[31] 'Ur-Faust' in *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe, ed. Wolfgang Kayser and Erich Trunz, 10th ed. (Munchen: Beck, 1981), III, p. 420.

[32] 'Introduzione,' in Alfieri's *Filippo-Antigone-Oreste-Saul-Mirra*, ed. Piero Gallardo (Novara: Instituto Geografico de Agostini, 1970), pp. 21-2.

[33] *Saul*, p. 360 [V, v]: 'Nell'atto ch'ei cade trafitto su la propria spada, soprarrivano in folla i Filistei vittoriosi . . . .'

[34] 'Introduction,' *Théâtre fiabesque*, trans. *Alphonse Royer* (Paris: Lévy, 1865), p. 4.

[35] Gozzi, *Le Corbeau*, p. 98 [V, ix].

[36] See Wolfram Krömer, 'Die Romantik in Spanien,' in Ernst Behler, H. Fauteck et al., *Die europäische Romantik* (Frankfurt/M.: Athenäum, 1972,

pp. 270-3; also J. Hunter Peak, Social Drama in Nineteenth-Century Spain, University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 51 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1964), pp. 15-29, esp. p. 28: '. . . a happy ending is easily and logically arranged,' and '. . . the action of the play stops altogether.'

[37] See F.D. Reeve, 'Introduction,' in his Anthology of Russian Plays: 1790-1890, Vintage Russian Library (New York: Vintage, 1961), pp. 6-7.

[38] B.V. Varneke, History of the Russian Theatre: Seventeenth through Nineteenth Century, trans. Boris Brasol, rev. and ed. Belle Martin, Russian Translation Project of the American Council of Learned Societies (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 122.

[39] P.N. Sakulin, Russian Literature, cited by Varneke, p. 123. (No further details of source given.)

[40] The Minor, in Anthology of Russian Plays, p. 83. It should be noted, however, that the use of stage directions dwelling upon gestures (e.g. Starodum points at Mrs. Prostokov when he utters the commentary) already injects dynamic and visual elements into the ending.

[41] L. Furst, The Contours of European Romanticism (n.p.: The University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 13. Furst suggests here that 'the Sturm und Drang may be considered a preliminary flood of the tide' of European Romanticism.

# CHAPTER SIX
## Toward a Romantic 'Poetics of Closure'

As the Romantic Movement progressively takes hold upon the form and content of the serious drama, the component structures and functions of closure undergo corresponding transformations. From the perspective of theory alone, the necessity for change is already prefigured. In a drama where time, place and action have lost their unity of focus, where character is prone to ambivalent permutations, where subjectivity and objectivity shift in a seemingly whimsical and spiralling movement, and where 'reality' has lost its basis in the manifest and rational, a shift to ambivalent, partially unresolved closure, with continuing tension and action, is a foreseeable development. Not only the Romantics' ontological awareness of the dynamic interrelationship between subject and object, but also their aesthetic awareness of what modern semiotics has called the 'polysemy' characterizing the 'signifying layer' and the 'signified mass' of the 'text without end' spurs on new orientations toward dramatic closure.[1]

Although, therefore, romantic theory seldom directly addresses the structures and functions of closure, an underlying 'poetics of the ending' nevertheless emerges from their theoretical writings. Friedrich Schlegel's designation of romantic literature as 'eine progressive Universalpoesie' centres upon a constant striving to attain a constantly shifting goal of total expression and vision, a pursuit which is, by its very nature, endless. By the same token, every work is essentially a fragment: 'Darum geht der Mensch, sicher sich selbst immer wieder zu finden, immer von neueum aus sich heraus, um die Ergänzung seines innersten Wesens in der Tiefe eines Fremden zu suchen und zu finden. Das Spiel der Mitteilung und der Annäherung ist das Geschäft und die Kraft des Lebens, absolute Vollendung ist nur im Tode' ('Gespräch über die Poesie' [1794-1800] II, p. 286). His references to dramatic closure, however, are themselves fragmentary in nature. The lecture 'Literatur' (1802; pr. 1803), for instance, reveals an awareness of the contrastive, antithetical possibilities of the dramatic ending, but fails to integrate the concept within a poetic system. Schlegel refers here to the 'zwei entgegengesetzten Zuständen' of closure in Schiller's Wallenstein, Maria Stuart, and Die Jungfrau von Orleans, and claims that the unresolved problems of the drama are transmitted to the spectator (III, p. 14).

Jean Paul's 'Wesen der romantischen Dichtkunst' in his Vorschule der Ästhetik (1803) again suggests only obliquely certain characteristics of closure. The essence of Romanticism, he intimates, lies in its suggestivity and its breadth of scope. Not only the unending, but also the vaguely evocative are its hallmarks. The 'Zweifellicht' of its vision carries in Jean Paul's usage a double connotation of the shadowy and the dubious or unreconciled. In his formulation of the goal of Romanticism as the creation of 'einer größern Zukunft, als hienieden Raum hat,'[3] a split between Ideal and Reality is inherent. When, therefore, in a choice that may seem curious to the twentieth-century critic, he speaks of Klinger as a representative Romantic, his comment may be applied in a more general context. The dramatic work of Klinger, he states, does not reconcile conflict, but rather deepens the 'Zwiespalt zwischen Wirklichkeit und Ideal,' until, 'wie ein Dorfgeigenstück, die Dissonanzen in eine schreiende Letzte [sich] auflöse[n]' (p. 100).

August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1808), in particular, reveals that the manner of ending a work is integral to the romantic ethos. Especially in the twelfth lecture of the series his delineation of the romantic drama contains *in nuce* a romantic 'poetics of closure.' The foremost aspect of the new drama, Schlegel maintains, lies in its blending of irreconcilable elements. Movement, contradiction, and paradox are at the heart of the romantic *Weltanschauung* and, by extension, of dramatic composition.

> Die antike Kunst und Poesie geht aus strenge Sonderung des Ungleichartigen, die romantische gefällt sich in unauflöslichen Mischungen; alle Entgegengesetzten: Natur und Kunst, Poesie und Prosa, Ernst und Scherz, Erinnerung und Ahndung, Geistigkeit und Sinnlichkeit, das Irdische und Göttliche, Leben und Tod, verschmelzt sie auf das innigste miteinander.[4]

While classical art and literature are based upon a harmonious view of what is certain, ordered and eternal, those of the Romantic Movement reflect the constantly reborn chaos which underlies all ordered creation. The central difference between the ancient and the contemporary drama thus lies in the contrast between the complete ('selbstständige Vollendung') and the fragmentary ('fragmentarisches Ansehen').

Schlegel now goes on to draw a parallel between the tragedy of antiquity and a group sculpture, and the romantic drama and a huge mural. In the former, 'die Figuren entsprechen dem Character, ihre Gruppierung der Handlung, und hierauf ist, als auf das einzige Dargestellte die Betrachtung bey Arten von Kunstwerken ausschließlich gerichtet' (II,

p. 114). The painting, on the other hand, is neither static nor complete:

> Das romantische Drama denke man sich hingegen als ein reiches Gemälde, wo außer der Gestalt und Bewegung in reicheren Gruppen auch noch die Umgebung der Personen mit abgebildet ist, nicht bloß die nächste, sondern ein bedeutender Ausblick in die Ferne, und dieß alles unter einer magischen Beleuchtung, welche den Eindruck so oder anders bestimmen helfen.
> (II, p. 115)

While the sculpture is focused and self-contained, the painting is part of a larger entity ('ein ausgeschnittnes Bruchstück aus dem optischen Schauplatze der Welt,' II, p. 115). At the same time, the latter reflects an interplay of colours, light effects, and distances. In the romantic drama, these aspects are paralleled by the shifting of time, place, and character, and the interplay of the comic and the serious. Concurrently, dialogue may shift from the common to the lyrical, and fantastic components may exist side by side with the mundane.

Applied to the ending, the above metaphors and delineations are significant and serve to suggest the types of closure employed by the Romantics. The 'dramatic narrative,' as Schlegel suggests, is no longer a self-contained entity with a distinct point of departure, climax, and ending. Rather, it becomes an excerpt from a larger, constantly fluctuating whole. In other words, the concept of 'ending' is in itself negated for, in the kaleidoscopic shifting of time, place, character and action, all completion is illusory. The drama, through its very definition, remains open-ended, just as the termination of a painting at the edge of the canvas does not means that the depicted scene stops at the same perimeter. While unity may exist in the sum total of contradictory elements, it can never be embodied within the work itself, which remains a fragment. Character, in opposition to the composed stances of the marble figures symbolizing classical tragedy, is also viewed in the romantic drama as a series of contradictory flashes, a moving part of the shifting mosaic of the text. Correspondingly, constant changes in perspective and an interplay of comic and serious components, particles in the cosmic movement of romantic irony, bring the drama to no definitive and static point of arrival.

Based on an overview of the European romantic drama, the present study aims to establish the existence of five basic types of closure among the Romantics: the climactic, tableau, collage, circular, and ironic reversal. All five types may be seen to reflect central aspects of romantic dramaturgy as delineated by Schlegel. The 'climactic' ending signals an abrupt, unexpected turn of events which concludes the drama on a pronounced upsurge of action and emotion, while suspense may be maintained and major questions concerning either past or future developments are left unresolved. Underlying this structure is the suggestion that the drama should not strive at an illusion of self-contained completeness when contradiction and fragmentation are at the heart of artistic creation and, indeed, at the heart of natural and human existence. A final synthesis, in the form of an all-embracing unity, can exist only in hints or prefigurations. Similarly, when the interaction of time, space, and action are no longer viewed as a linear progression, propelled forward by cause and effect to a stable, modified and fixed ending, the 'circular' structure emerges. While, on the one side, the 'core plot' involving the protagonist(s) has come to a halt, the 'framework action' may, in an about-swing of situation, move back to parallel the initial state, so that beginning and ending are merely stages in an on-going, rotating cycle.

In the 'collage' structure, the intrigue does not rise to a single high point of tension and then fall to a final situation, preparatory to a reinstatement of stasis and harmony. Rather, a kaleidoscopic array of situations, punctuated by thematic, spatial and temporal shifts, may evolve. In this seemingly random juxtaposition of contradictory moods and emotions, colloquial dialogue and lyrical profusions, crowd scenes and introspective monologues, comic and tragic notes, changes of time and place, chaos as an aesthetic ideal underlies the larger but unattainable ideal of unity.

The 'ironic reversal' structure, however, suggests that an ironic game, illustrative of the 'Scherz und Ernst,' or simultaneous creation and destruction, of romantic irony, is played. Both the theatre and human existence are revealed to contain seeming truths which, at a pinprick, prove to be illusions or, at most, half-truths. Here, as with the other closural structures, the relativizing effects of the shifting perspectives of the romantic drama are evident.

Finally, Schlegel's central metaphor, that of a 'großes Gemälde,' suggests yet another type of closure, the tableau. At this point, a recapitulation of Diderot's concept of the tableau will illustrate the changes that coincide with Romanticism. A frequently-recurring comparison in Le Discours de la poésie dramatique is that of the theatrical tableau and the painting. The stage, Diderot contends, must adopt the visual resources of the artist and seek to go beyond mere verbal representation. Referring to Poussin's Les Bergers d'Arcadie (1638-9), he lauds its juxtaposition of contrasting motifs such as time and space, life and death. This he cites as a model for the stage. The contrasts can, moreover, be dynamic, for successive tableaux will create a theatrical illusion of the changing scenes of real life: 'Il faut mettre les figures ensemble, les rapprocher ou les disperser, les isoler ou les grouper, et en tirer une succession de tableaux, tous composés d'une manière grande et vraie.'[5] Here, however, the thinking of Diderot and Schlegel diverges. While for the former, the representational aspect is of prime importance, and change and movement are rendered by means of a series of individual pictures judiciously inserted within the drama, the latter regards the painting as an excerpt from a larger unity. The fragment is composed of shifting dimensions, views, and contrasts. In short, its purpose is not merely to reproduce an impression of reality on the stage, but rather, it functions as a magic screen upon which all elements, real and fantastic, are in a state of tension and motion. Suggestion has thus replaced depiction, and even when the ending draws out a subset of components as the objects of particular focus, they are yet to be viewed as configurations of a larger entity.

Although the theoretical writings of A.W. Schlegel offer the major comprehensive view of the romantic drama, Ludwig Tieck frequently comments in his Kritische Schriften (pr. 1826) upon the closural practices of his contemporaries. From Tieck's criticism, a partial view of his 'sense of the ending' may be constructed. That his dramatic reviews, however, were written considerably later than his dramas necessarily influences the reliability of his critiques for, like the Schlegels, Tieck does not maintain the iconoclasm of his earlier years.

His criticism of Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy perceptively remarks, in a fairly neutral manner, that the individual parts are not separated from one another, but that the action of one flows into that of the next. The pessimism of the ending of Wallensteins Tod is more the object of his attack than the closural structure.[6]

A view of the ending emerges more clearly from the commentary accompanying Tieck's Kleist edition of 1821. In Heinrich von Kleist, Tieck sees an artist whose stature exceeds that of most of his contemporaries. The 'tiefe Disharmonie' and 'grelle Wiedersprüche' in the younger dramatist's life and works are dormant in most people; Kleist, however, exaggerates these to the point of hypochondria (II, pp. 22-3). His closural practice, Tieck maintains, is symptomatic of this ailment. Of Die Familie Schroffenstein he comments that the author closes as if he had no concept of dramatic form. The ideal ending, Tieck prescribes, should contain 'eine wunderbare Heiligkeit und bedeutende Seltsamkeit,' and, more essential, 'ist dies, wenn die ganze Dichtung auf ihm als dem Angelpunkt ruht und sich bewegt' (II, p. 31). The type of ending here advocated is thus not wholly traditional; rather, closure is viewed as a pivotal structure combining both an exalted vision and singular developments in a paradoxical state of simultaneous repose and motion. Kleist, however, ends Die Familie Schroffenstein with one fell blow; although Tieck admits that this is accomplished with great originality, he claims that all 'Täuschung und Theilnahme' (II, p. 31) are thereby lost. Upon the appearance of a decrepit old woman (i.e. the 'witch' Ursula), the work gives way to reconciliation in a weak Shakespearean echo: 'Rupert und Sylvester versöhnen sich, und man sieht hier den Romeo in der Erinnerung wieder, doch ist in diesem [i.e. in Romeo and Juliet] Werke der Schluß erhebend, während die Aussöhnung hier nur matt und unbedeutend erscheint' (II, p. 34). Surprisingly, Tieck, in spite of the all-pervasive irony and mockery of his comedies, here ignores a central aspect of Kleist's ending. He does not consider that the writer's intent may indeed be ironic, that he aims at undoing the convention of final appeasement by driving it to its most blatantly parodied extremes.

The tone of disapprobation continues in Tieck's analyses of Kleist's succeeding works. Of Amphitryon he has little positive to write; the conclusion is, he maintains, wilful and unsatisfactory, a fault shared by all younger dramatists of Kleist's generation (II, p. 36). While even the deficiencies of Penthesilea would benefit the work of others, its ending is 'übertrieben energisch' ( II, p. 38). That of Käthchen von Heilbronn dispells the dignified, poetic content of the drama by allowing superstition to tread forth in a bare, raw manner (II, p. 43). The ending of Die Hermannsschlacht errs in all possible ways, being 'entweder zu schwach oder auch zu stark' (II, p. 55). It allows us, moreover, to see little of the decisive battle that ends the conflict, and is further weakened by removing the focus from the titular hero. Only the outcome of Prinz Friedrich von Homburg wins Tieck's unqualified praise. Here, he observes, 'das Ganze schließt nach der großen Erschütterung lieblich und wundersam, wie es begonnen hatte' (III, pp. 5-6).

By way of conclusion to the Kleist essay, Tieck cites the letter of his friend Karl W.F. Solger, who insightfully focuses upon two central characteristics of Kleist's work: the dramatist's emphasis on the delineation of character by means of unique situations and effects, and his propensity 'über das Gegebene und Wirklich hinwegzugehen, und die eigentliche Handlung in eine fremde, geistige oder wunderbare Welt zu versetzen' (II, p. 56). This general observation lays the ground for one of several possible interpretations of the factors underlying the closural practice of Kleist. The dramatist's sudden dispersal of the solidity of character and a logical plot development into a terrifying but intangible world of duplicity controlled by the intransigence of fate may indeed, as Solger suggests, be prompted by a double focus on life-like characterization and the 'Kehrseite' of seeming reality.

Like Tieck, however, Solger intimates that Kleist's sense of the ending is inappropriate to the requirements of dramatic form. The author's talent, he maintains, is not theatrical, and his presentation of character by means of a central 'Begebenheit' is more effective in the novella than in the drama (II, p. 56). This somewhat baffling contention may suggest, as with the elderly Tieck, a certain prescriptiveness which clings to the conventional norms governing the form and content of drama. By the same token, Tieck's awareness of the 'peculiarity' of Kleistian closure nevertheless indicates that conventions have been broken, and that new structures and functions of the ending are emerging.

One factor should not, however, be discredited: Tieck does not judge Kleist's endings by the yardstick of Aristotelian-based norms. According to Tieck, the outcome need not gather up and resolve the indeterminacies of the dramatic text. The ending is indeed a climax of the drama, a point where the marvellous and the exceptional are interwoven. Concurrently, the 'Verschweigen' (III, p. 6) of the ending, or its lack of complete resolution, impells the reader or the spectator to complete and interpret, and thereby to share in the creative process. What inspires the disapproval of Tieck and, to a less marked degree, Solger, is related to Kleistian irony. In the dramas of Kleist, irony is not what it is in Tieck's comedies or even in his Genoveva, a whimsical back-and-forth shifting from the absurd to the weighty. Rather, it represents an existential dilemma, a solid block at the core of existence which renders freedom of action a mere illusion. Movement in the Kleistian drama consists in the gesticulations of the marionette, and irony, in the deception that he moves his limbs freely.[7]

Of the three language groups which form the focus of our study, the British reveal the least interest in the discussion of dramatic theory, preferring to write interpretations of Shakespeare, reviews of contemporary performances, and condemnations of stage practice and popular tastes. Nevertheless, in spite of a relative conservatism which emphasizes 'unity' over 'multeity,' Samuel Taylor Coleridge reveals pronounced affinities with continental theorists. Drama, he maintains, shares with the other arts an 'ever-varying balance, or balancing, of images, notions, or feelings . . . conceived as in opposition to each other, in short, the perception of identity and contrariety, the least degree of which constitutes likeness, the greatest absolute difference; but the infinite gradations between these two form all the play and all the interest of our intellectual and moral being, till it lead us to a feeling and an object more awful that it seems to me compatible with even the present subject to utter aloud . . . .'[8] Here again, as in Schlegel's lectures, an absence of definitive closure is prefigured by Coleridge's awareness of the 'infinite gradations' of the alternation between 'likeness' and 'difference.' The English writer's emphasis on 'balance' yet indicates a less than wilful interaction of contrary elements. Concurrently, an ever-rising motion is nevertheless suggested. Obliquely, the movement of a drama is sketched in an upward motion, propelled forward by a dialectic of contraries. The culmination of this rising path represents, Coleridge intimates, a massively overpowering response. Indirectly, the explosive effect of the climactic ending is here described, while the concept of catharsis as purgation or the calm that succeeds intense emotional response is notably absent.

In the context of poetics, Wordsworth's 'Preface' to the Lyrical Ballads (1798) also has some relevance to closure. Language, he stresses, is the vehicle of feeling, which is in turn 'modified and directed by thought.'[9] Consequently, poetic form is not inherited from past convention but is a product of the original mind, which transmits 'continued influxes' of thought and feeling into the words that make up the literary text. Feeling becomes a dynamic force: 'the feeling therein developed [i.e. in modern-day poetry] gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling' (p. 735). By extension, the very structure of action, as in the careful build-up and resolution of conflict in the form of the traditional drama, will be undermined. Not action and situation but the personality of the individual serve as the subject matter of poetry.

Wordsworth's theory also reflects, however, a blend of subjectivity and didacticism which still reveals traces of eighteenth-century thought. Although he claims that the poet can 'bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes' (p. 735), he simultaneously aims at enlightening 'the understanding of the reader' and at 'strengthening and purifying his affections' (p. 737).

More decisively, the dramatic theory of Joanna Baillie in her influential 'Introductory Discourse' to A Series of Plays in which it is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind (First Series, 1798) directs the focus of the playwright away from action and intrigue. Baillie states that her plays on the passions aim at delineating the anatomy of the human emotions; in other words, her interest centers upon the emotional process taking place within the character, and not on the outward chain of action in which he is involved. In a sense, therefore, the flow of causal-temporal developments which move from an initial to an end point is lost in Baillie's emphasis upon the interiorized drama of passion. The 'dispositions and tempers of men' are, according to her, reflected not in events, but in the 'opposite passions and affections of the mind.'[10] The drama thus emerges as a collage of stages marking the emotional responses of the central character(s); the focus has been removed from the interaction of cause and effect in a delimited framework of time leading to a logically determined ending.

Contradictions lie, however, within the theoretical statements of the Romantics, and reveal a continued wavering between tradition and innovation. One illustration of this phenomenon lies in Shelley's discourse on drama, contained within his Defence of Poetry (1817). Here he describes the drama as 'a prismatic and many-sided mirror'--a statement which suggests affinity with the theory of Friedrich and A.W. Schlegel, and seemingly contradicts the idea of static, reconciled closure. This is, however, followed by a reference to the 'exalted calm' whereby the 'good affections are strengthened.'[11] Whether this calm and moral affirmation are in themselves definitive, or form part of the ongoing process of the entity, remains an open question.

Shelley's preface to his drama The Cenci (wr. 1819) voices a view which corresponds more closely to his dramatic practice. The drama, he states, is no place for the enforcement of dogma. Not referring directly to closure, he yet rejects the moralizing that frequently accompanies it: 'There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose.'[12]

William Hazlitt, possibly the most objective of English romantic critics of the drama, reveals a marked socio-historical bent in his theoretical writings about the theatre. In the present age, he claims, the playwright's sense of belonging to a communal and religious entity has disappeared. The dramatist is alienated from his would-be public: 'The poet . . . can only act by sympathy with the public mind and manners of his age; but these are, at present, not in sympathy, but in opposition to dramatic poetry. Therefore we have no dramatic poets.'[13] Integration is the fulcrum of the drama, a fulcrum now absent: 'To move the world he [the dramatist] must have a place to fix the levers of invention upon' (IV, pp. 418-9). The French Revolution and its aftermath, claims Hazlitt, have transformed the dramatist into a solitary figure aiming a fulcrumless lever at the globe: 'That event has rivetted all eyes . . . and, like people staring at a comet, in the panic and confusion we have not had time to laugh at another's defects, or to condole over one another's misfortune' (IV, p. 416). In an age without a dynamic combination of what would be, to Friedrich Schlegel, 'Scherz und Ernst,' the mind centres upon 'the rise of stocks, the loss of battles, and the death of kings' (IV, p. 416). The English have become, he concludes, a nation of 'newsmongers.'

Not only Hazlitt's diagnosis that the literary dramatist is alienated from his age, but also his formulation of dramatic form and content suggest that conventional modes of closure will no longer be appropriate. In his view, the drama focuses upon the characters and emotions of individuals. 'Each character . . . . must be a kind of centre of repulsion to the rest,' he claims (IV, p. 418). The 'excess of passion' expressed by characters 'in dire contention with each other' is expressed in the 'fluctuations and caprices' of the verse of the drama; this is, however, rooted in the 'deep and strict foundations of nature' (IV, p. 418). Only the specific as it pertains to the vagaries of character should form the subject-matter; 'general, speculative truth, and possibilities of good' (IV, p. 418) will serve only to smother all dramatic potential.

Hazlitt's delineation of the nature of drama does not, therefore, suggest a causal-temporal progression of action leading to a final situation; rather, he describes a chaotic drama, fraught with opposing tensions and fluctuating emotions voiced in shrill tones. The idea of fusion is remarkably absent from his description, which suggests rather that the drama is an aggregate of fragments from which no sense of final integration emerges.

The article by Hazlitt 'On Wit and Humour' (1818) touches upon yet another problem of signal importance in the romantic treatment of closure. In this study, the first of a series of lectures on English comic writers, a distinction is drawn between the essence of laughter and tears in the theatre. Significantly, the concepts of pity, fear and catharsis are absent from his delineation of the tragic response. Emotion constitutes an end in itself: 'Now the serious is the habitual stress which the mind lays upon the expectation of a given order of events, following one another with a certain regularity and weight of interest attached to them. When this stress is increased beyond its usual pitch of intensity, so as to overstrain the feelings by the violent opposition of good to bad, or of objects to our desires, it becomes the pathetic or tragical' (IV, p. 7). In accordance with his denunciation of 'general, speculative truth' and moralizing in his Dramatic Essays, the 'purgative' effect concommitant with 'catharsis' as developed on the basis of Aristotle does not figure in his concept of tragedy and, it may be inferred, of tragic closure.

French romantic theory is the slowest among our three major literatures to evolve, although closure practice among the French Romantics is to be the most dynamic and flamboyant. The confidence with which Victor Hugo is later to declare his departure from prescriptive form and content is, with Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant, only expressed in tentative terms, laced with carryovers from Enlightenment and Sentimentalist thought.

Germaine de Staël's De la littérature (1800) has little to say of a direct nature concerning dramatic theory and practice. In its rejection of the mixing of tragic and comic elements in Shakespeare's dramas, for instance, an adherance to the strictures of Neo-Classicism is visible. By the same token, the emphasis on the social and moral values of literature, and the tendency to view both morality and utility in terms of the work's ability to evoke emotion, evinces a blending of neo-classicist and sentimentalist precepts. As René Wellek summarizes, Mme de Staël's 'main view of the function of literature . . . is emotionalist and rhetorical, but also moralistic and utilitarian.'[14]

Between the publication of De la littérature and the later De l'Allemagne (banned in 1810; pr. 1813), another 'dramatic manifesto' appears. In her work of 1800, de Staël had already recommended an evolution toward historical tragedy on the French stage.[15] In Benjamin Constant's adaptation of the second and third parts of Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy (Wallstein, 1809) and his preface, 'Quelques réflexions sur la tragédie de Wallstein et sur le théâtre allemand,' a historical work is transposed into a new cultural milieu, and its themes and form analysed and assessed.

Constant begins his preface by focusing on two central romantic ideals: individualism and originality. Independence from aesthetic norms, he intimates, leads to originality and the assertion of individualism: 'à mesure que l'autorité se concentre, les individus s'effacent.'[16] In foreign literatures, and particularly among the English and the Germans, the individual is the centre of interest. The German historical drama, he goes on to say, reflects this personal concentration in choosing to portray epochs dominated by outstanding figures.

The relevance of the above assertion to a study of dramatic closure may at first appear minimal. Constant's awareness of the aesthetic value of originality and individualism yet marks an important development. Closure in the tragedies of Racine has, for instance, depicted the final fusion of the personal with a larger communal and religious entity, while the differentiation of the individual against a shifting background of historical events breeds, by extension, a new ethos reflected in closure, with less possibility of final reconciliation. Constant, in describing the central conflicts of Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen and Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy as those of 'une vie indépendante' against a civilization which tries to impose 'l'uniformité, l'obéissance, et la discipline,' hints at an awareness of sustained tensions (p. 49).

Moving more directly to Schiller's text, Constant reveals an acute insight into what the German writer has accomplished with the 'dénouement.' He also confirms indirectly an observation to which our overvieww of eighteenth-century closure has already led: that the German drama precedesboth the French and the English in the practice of closural innovation. Constant observes: 'Les Allemands tolèrent ainsi tantôt une pièce sans action, le Camp de Wallstein; tantôt une action sans dénouement, les Piccolomini; tantôt une action sans dénouement, les Piccolomini; tantôt un dénouement sans exposition, la mort de Wallstein' (p. 51). Few critics have so succinctly yet without negative judgement summarized Schiller's closure practice in his trilogy.

Constant goes on to sketch more differences that distinguish the German drama from the French: the use of subsidiary chorus-like characters to analyze the action and to aid in the portrayal of the protagonist's character, the presence of down-to-earth details, the employment of tableaux, the opposition of antagonistic forces, the vast spread of action and character. The distance still separating German dramatic practice from that of the French re-emerges with the author's comment, 'Je suis loin de recommander l'introduction de ces moyens dans nos tragédies' (p. 56). In his adaptation, he claims, he has upheld the rules of the French theatre. Like a traveller, therefore, who decides that in spite of the novelty of the places he has visited, he much prefers being at home, Constant concludes: 'La tragédie française est, selon moi, plus parfaite que celle des autres peuples' (p. 67).

The article of Prosper de Barante in Le Publiciste (15 fév 1809) reveals, like Constant's preface, the distance still separating German nineteenth-century closure practice from that of the French. Although Constant has loyally claimed to adhere to French structural norms, Barante complains that, in the profusion of incidents in the fifth act of the adaptation, no 'catastrophe' can be isolated: each development could in itself constitute a 'catastrophe.' He continues: 'tout cela forme dans mon imagination un tableau dont l'imitation sur la scène me semble impossible . . . .'[16] At the same time, he claims that the 'dénouement' is double, representing, on the one hand, the results of a conspiracy, and, on the other, the inevitable death of a fate-ridden, defeated hero. The implications underlying this statement are that, to the French mind of 1809, a single line of intrigue must lead to a logically-developed consequence, and that inevitability and not an untoward complication of the plot must accomplish the final situation. Barante's imprecise use of the terms 'catastrophe' and 'dénouement' support, moreover, our contention that alternate terms are necessary.

The commentaries of Constant and Barante are significant for the furthering of a deeper understanding of the changes accomplished by European Romanticism in the theory and practice of dramatic closure. The beginnings of innovation may well be signalled by critical notice of 'odd' or 'bizarre' literary phenomena.

The historical importance of Mme de Staël's De l'Allemagne with its wide readership cannot be underrated. Her work is a landmark in the history of Comparative Literature; in spite of a certain hesitance in admitting that the boundaries of literature are fluid, and not determined exclusively by 'national character,' the work represents a culmination of the cultural relativism already naissant in the earlier eighteenth century, as in Montesquieu's Lettres persanes (1721). The views developed in De l'Allemagne provide the kernal of the dramatic theory later voiced in Hugo's preface to Cromwell (1827).

In the years since the writing of De la littérature, Mme de Staël's contacts with German literature, writers, theorists and philosophers had expanded. The close ties with Constant and A.W. Schlegel, in particular, demonstrate the communal interest and sharing of ideas characteristic of the Romantic Movement.

The discussion of 'l'art dramatique' in De l'Allemagne begins by positing a relativistic concept of dramatic norms: since drama is 'la littérature en action' and results from a fusion of circumstances (i.e. the public one addresses) and poetic inspiration, the same system cannot be imposed on all nations.[17] Art is thus in a fluid state of motion, and the content of the drama should dictate the form, and not the form the content. As the focus of dramatic art turns from the portrayal of the passions to the depiction of character, it is equally necessary to abandon exalted diction and noble content:

> Le vulgaire, dans la nature, se mêle souvent au sublime, et quelquefois en relève l'effet: enfin, on ne peut se figurer l'action d'un caractère que pendant un espace de temps un peu long, et dans vingt-quatre heures il ne sauroit être vraiment question que d'une catastrophe (X, p. 351).

In the above passage, the sacrosanct unity of time falls under attack; simultaneously, the system of contrasts which forms the basis of Hugo's 'sublime-grotesque' dialectic is intimated. With the first mention of closure ('catastrophe'), moreover, Staël reveals an awareness that a single catastrophe is not the sole means of projecting a drama to its outcome. Another possibility exists in the drama of character, that of 'tableaux nuancés' (X, p. 351). Mme de Staël's response to this possibility appears, however, lukewarm, for she goes on to observe that 'le mouvement excité par les passions vives plaît à la plupart des spectateurs plus que l'attention qu'exige l'observation du coeur humain.'

In effect, she shrugs off the possibility of innovation, stating that 'le goût national . . . seul peut décider de ces différences' (X, pp. 351-2). Although she reveals a relativistic approach to literary modes, she does not yet view literature as a dynamic intersection and partial fusion of cultural developments.

De Staël does, however, admit the necessity of change in the form and content of literature: 'Rien dans la vie doit être stationnaire, et l'art est pétrifié, quand il ne change plus' (X, p. 354). This statement is as significant to closure as to aesthetics in general. Not only, she goes on, is the natural tendency of the age toward the historical tragedy, but also verbal and thematic energy must infuse the drama.

A poetics of closure emerges piecemeal from her criticism of prominent German dramas. Of Lessing's Nathan der Weise she comments that the closing moral is too self-consciously appended, that the philosophical argument merely weakens the theatrical potential of the drama and imparts a certain coldness (X, pp. 355-6). Like Constant, she remarks that Schiller's Piccolomini has no dénouement: 'elle finit comme une conversation interrompue' (X, p. 389). Somewhat inaccurately, she refers to both Wallensteins Lager and Die Piccolomini as 'prologues,' not noting that the action and conflict of the second part is propelled forward by its dynamic 'nonending' into the third. Attacking the condemnation of Constant's adaptation by various French critics, she expresses regret that 'cette nature ondoyante' is absent from contemporary French tragedy (X, p. 396). This description of the 'wavelike' motion of the dramatic text, which applies equally well to closural structure and content as to dramatic form in general, affirms, according to de Staël, the interfusion and juxtaposition of antithetical traits within the human spirit.

Schiller's Maria Stuart brings Mme de Staël to yet another aspect of closure. In France, she observes, the idea of composing an entire act upon a situation that has already been decided would be absurd; the German poet-dramatist, however, creates true and profound emotions in a dramatic act which otherwise depicts stasis and hopelessness. Mood, it is thus intimated, predominates in Schiller's ending to Maria Stuart. By implication, the closing scene resembles an emotional tableau.

The ending of Die Jungfrau von Orleans comes, however, under severe attack:

> Le seul défaut grave qu'on puisse reprocher à ce drame lyrique, c'est le dénoûment . . . . Le merveilleux d'invention, à côté du merveilleux transmis par l'histoire, ôte à ce sujet quelque chose de sa gravité (X, p. 445).

Again, this assessment reveals a keenness of critical insight; in attacking the contrived nature of the deus ex machina ending of Die Jungfrau, Staël also attacks a turn of events which attempts to seal the ending in a state of completeness, thereby contradicting the enigmatic character of Johanna, her motivations, and her relationship with the decadent court of Karl.

The most direct and general statement of de Staël's view of closure emerges from her discussion of Goethe's Egmont. Here she claims that the ending is not at all in harmony with the whole: 'ce dénoûment merveilleux ne peut convenir à une pièce historique' (X, p. 485). This is, she continues, a weakness of the German drama, for the skill and moderation demanded in arriving at an ending are foreign to the German nature, which is given to extremes:

> D'ailleurs il faut de l'art, et beaucoup d'art, pour trouver un dénoûment, car il y en a rarement dans la vie; les faits s'enchaînent les uns aux autres, et leurs conséquences se perdent dans la suite des temps. La connoissance du théâtre seul apprend à circonscrire l'événement principal, et à faire concourir tous les accessoires au même but. Mais, combiner les effets semble presque aux Allemands de l'hypocrisie, et le calcul leur paraît irreconciliable avec l'inspiration (X, p. 485).

The above passage serves as a key to Mme de Staël's 'poetics of closure.' Her view is still visibly immersed in French Classicism. In spite of her perspicacious observation that life offers no dénouement, she still insists--although somewhat half-heartedly--that the ending should provide a rounding-off of action and development. In short, it should represent a full stop, leaving no unresolved elements. The 'main event' should, moreover, be distinct from the 'dénouement,' which serves as a wrapping paper to prevent the contents of the package from spilling out. One significant omission does, however, place Mme de Staël at a crucial crossroads in the history of French closure: she does not demand that the content of the ending should reinstate harmony or provide that chimerical form of literary therapy called 'catharsis.' In addition, her overview of German drama, along with the observations of Constant and Barante, reinforce our thesis that German Sturm und Drang closure, further developed in the final years of the eighteenth century and the opening decades of the nineteenth, serves as the typological pioneer of the romantic revolution in 'the sense of the ending.'

One measure of the distance that the French awareness of the dramatic potential of closural innovation has advanced in little over a decade after the seminal work of Mme de Staël and Benjamin Constant is provided by Prosper Mérimée. Using the terms 'catastrophe' and 'dénouement' interchangeably, he writes:

> Une catastrophe, pour être imposante, doit être sanglante et rapide; le rideaut doit tomber aussitôt que le coup est frappé, si l'on veut prolonger l'impression dans l'âme du spectateur.[18]

While one element, that of rapidity, reflects the neo-classical doctrine, the others--the 'bloodiness,' the precipitous curtain, the maintenance of emotion and suspense in the minds of the spectators--are central to what the present study has designated the 'climactic' ending. Surprisingly, the German Romanist Gerd Thieltges yet claims that Mérimée's concept of the ending remains traditional: 'So offenbart Mérimées Definition der Katastrophe, trotz ihrer Betonung des "blutigen" Ausganges, eine bemerkenswerte Ähnlichkeit mit der traditionellen klassischen Theorie des "dénouement."'[19] In our view, the differences are more striking than the parallels.

Victor Hugo's preface to Cromwell (1827), the foremost statement of French dramatic theory in the Romantic Era, illustrates yet another shift of emphasis by basing its central opposition, that of the sublime and the grotesque, upon 'cet esprit de mélancolie chrétienne et de critique philosophique' which replaces the ordered spirit of Classicism.[20] Diversity and contrariety are, Hugo argues--and here the typological concurrence with German and English theory is evident--at the heart of the romantic drama. The artistic vision, expanding with the inception of a new age, realizes 'que le laid y existe à côté du beau, le difforme près du gracieux, le grotesque au revers du sublime, le mal avec le bien, l'ombre avec la lumière' (III, p. 50). Once more, as in the delineations of Schlegel and Coleridge, the infinity of possible contrasts and combinations prefigures both an ideal of unity and, because of the inability to enclose this ideal unity within static boundaries, a necessary incompleteness or fragmentation. In a typological echo of both A.W. Schlegel's sculpture-painting antimony and its summary by Mme de Staël, Hugo maintains that classical art offers a complete but restricted symmetry based on beauty; with the interaction of grotesque elements, however, a 'grand ensemble . . . qui s'harmonise, non pas avec l'homme, mais avec la création tout entière' (III, p. 50) is created. Hence the paradox that, despite the global unity, romantic art endlessly presents 'des aspects nouveaux mais incomplets' (III, p. 55). By extension, the dramatic ending also offers new but incomplete aspects of the entity of the work.

Hugo's preface makes several direct references to closure. To a certain extent, classical precepts linger in his view of the outcome. He states at one point, for instance, 'l'action marche à la conclusion d'une allure ferme et facile, sans diffusion et sans étranglement' (III, p. 71). Although he does not postulate that the ending should be a logical and inevitable outcome of the intrigue, he yet suggests that its path should be direct and uncontrived. Although he himself is given in his dramas to diffusions and to sudden reversals or 'coups de théâtre,' he advocates a concentration of language and action. At the same time, in a departure from conventional practice, Hugo implies that, with the avoidance of 'strangled' endings, the conclusion should develop naturally and organically from the drama itself, with no superimposed harmony and no artificial suppression of continuing tensions and unresolved aspects.

Yet another of Hugo's remarks supports the concept of the 'circular' ending. The present age of Christian melancholy, he maintains, is ideally suited to the insertion of lyrical elements within the drama. This blending leads to a certain circularity or a paradoxical shift from ending to beginning: 'C'est qu'il y a plus d'un rapport entre le commencement et la fin ' (III, p. 59), in the same way that sunrise and sunset, youth and age share common elements. The ending may thus parallel the beginning, although the knowledge derived from the past events of the drama injects new overtones of melancholy (III, p. 59).

Although Hugo singles out the ode to illustrate the circularity of the ending and the beginning, his historical awareness may here also be applied to dramatic closure. The drama, he implies, does not move forward in a linear course, but is characterized by forward and backward shifts in theme, situation, time and space. Such a concept not only suggests circularity but also a series of ironic reversals. The interplay between the sublime and the grotesque, body and soul, the 'bouffon' and the 'terrible' (III, pp. 60-2) implies a constant pivoting between dichotomies. At yet another point, in an echo of Diderot recast in a symbolic light, he advocates the primacy of tableau over mere description (III, p. 63).

Hugo's remarks upon the ending of Cromwell are more or less an application of the closural principles advanced in the preceding theoretical passages. He notes the drama's departure from conventional practice: 'Dénouement étrange!' (III, p. 79). Indirectly, his description of the final scene of Cromwell leads to an affirmation of its circular, climactic, and collage structures. It is circular, in the sense that the great event (the coronation of Cromwell) toward which the action seems to lead fails to happen; in this way, the final situation swings back to the initial one. The 'grande péripétie,' Cromwell's sudden decision to refuse the crown, represents an overwhelming surprise, and thus a climactic ending (III, p. 80). The whimsical shifting from mass scenes to impassioned orations to the interior monologues of the hero (III, p. 79) constitutes the structure we have designated 'collage.' The general lack of resolution of the final scene is suggested by the series of questions which the drama, like history, leaves unresolved (III, pp. 79-80). More generally, Hugo's preface attacks the idea of the conventional 'commentary' incorporated in traditional structures. The poet, the French Romantic articulates, should not use the drama as a mouthpiece for his own prejudices and judgements. Personal commentary, description, moral evaluation, or compliments to the spectators, aimed at forging an impression of epic completion, must be avoided (III, p. 46).

Our overview of closure theory among the German, English and French Romantics thus negates, to varying degrees, the idea of definitive and static closure. An examination of romantic theory among Danish, Italian, Slavic, and Spanish Romantics further reinforces the affinity of thought thus far observed, although here again allowances must be made for contradictions and a gap between theory and practice. Just as Shelley's moralistic emphasis in A Defence of Poetry is undercut by the ambiguities of action and character in The Cenci, so the theory of Manzoni and the Spanish Romantics, for instance, must be approached with scepticism.

These divergences between authorial statements and texts seem to suggest that the application of theory should be prefaced by a solid and critical reading of the dramatic works of the period.

The Danish dramatist Adam Oelenschläger, who adapted his own dramas into German and thus forms part of both literary traditions, devotes a lengthy passage in the 'Selbstbiographie' prefacing the 1839 edition of his Werke to a discussion of the Aristotelian theory of tragedy. His attitude is basically approving: 'denn so einfach er [Aristotle] auch ist, spricht er doch die wichtigsten Ideen der dramatischen Theorie befriedigend aus.'[21] This somewhat surprising statement from an author whose epic-lyrical dramas span huge distances of time and space, however, follows a summary which ignores Aristotle's dictum of the unities. Oehlenschläger's interpretation, moreover, imposes certain modifications. Episodic construction, he stipulates, is only condemned in the Poetics insofar as it countermands the laws of unity and necessity. He goes on to note that Antigone and Ajax end episodically, without, however, explaining his statement. This observation he ties in with a general note on dramatic closure: 'Und die Meinung, daß eine Tragödie nothwendig mit dem Kulminationspunkte der Handlung enden solle, ist ganz und gar falsch. Eine Tragödie ist kein Epigramm, das mit einer Pointe abknallen soll. Oft ist der Erfolg einer wichtigen Handlung höchst rührend, interessant, belehrend und erhebend' (I, p. 57). In this statement, a mixture of traditional and anti-traditional thought is observable. On the one hand, Oehlenschläger rejects highly active, abrupt and sensational closure such as we shall find in the climactic ending; on the other, he does not downgrade the significance of the ending, but admits that it may inspire affective responses and continuing interest. Concurrently, however, traces of an enlightenment mentality persist in the Danish writer's emphasis on the 'instructive' role of closure.

Among the Italian Romantics, the major explorations of dramatic theory are Alessandro Manzoni's preface to his first tragedy, Il Conte de Carmagnola (1820) and his later 'Lettre de M. Manzoni à M. C______, sur l'unité de temps et de lieu dans la tragédie,' written in French in reply to the criticisms of Victor Chauvet.[22] The preface, as René Wellek summarizes, offers merely an attack on the classical unities of time and place, maintains that the truth of historical events reconstructed with the aid of the imagination should be the basis of dramatic action, and views the stage as an instrument for moral improvement.[23] On the surface, therefore, Manzoni appears both a realist and a moralist. His voluminous letter, however, also composed in 1820, reveals a more pronounced affinity with the mainstreams of romantic theory. The drama is, he argues, not an artificial construct where action is manipulated to conform to ready-made formal demands: 'À quoi bon créer une action, un Noeud, des péripéties, pour motiver un résultat dont les motifs sont des faits?'[24] In this statement, he suggests that the form of drama is intrinsic, a result of the represented action, and not an extrinsic set of norms controlling the presentation of the content. The parallels between this concept and that of organic form as outlined by the Schlegels and Coleridge serves as a partial denial of Wellek's conclusion that little affinity exists between the so-called romantic generation of Italy and the European movement at large.

In the view of Manzoni, the facts of history dictate the development of the dramatic intrigue, and the dramatist's function consists chiefly in choosing the most effective combination of elements and imaginatively filling in the gaps where history remains silent. In other words, the imagination of the dramatist creates the local colour and seizes upon the pulse of an epoch, while characterization endows the events of the work with depth and motivation. The dramatist thus contributes his subjective vision to the objective facts of history, all the time remaining aware of the infinite resources of the historical raw material (p. 162). He must not merely direct the action and manipulate the intrigue in such a way that 'une fois les personnages contents ou morts, il ne reste plus dans l'action aucun sujet d'incertitude ou de curiosité' (p. 163). The ending, therefore, does not 'untie' all complications and remove all ambiguities. History, Manzoni suggests, offers no certitude, and by the same token, the dramatist should superimpose none. When the contrived is replaced by the 'real'--and here 'true to nature' best appears to render Manzoni's meaning--the spectator as well as the dramatist will become attuned to finding 'dans la connaissance des événements, des causes simples, vraies et variées à l'infini' (p. 175). Truth is thus to Manzoni the result of a dialectical process blending subjectivity with objectivity. Paradoxically, the 'result' is not definitive, but open to an infinite variety of permutations.

In spite of its fragmentary state, Aleksandr Puškin's article 'On National-Popular Drama and the Play Martha the Seneschal's Wife' (wr. 1830, pr. 1841-2) is a particularly eloquent rendering of the author's concept of dramatic structure. Central to the fragment is the

Russian romantic view of narodnost', a variant of the European-wide romantic emphasis on folk roots and national-linguistic awareness. Laurence Senelick offers the following assessment of Puškin's article and the impact of narodnost':

> But what keeps Pushkin's remarks on popular drama from being a mere paraphrase of Schlegel or a Russian recension of Lessing's Hamburg Dramaturgy and Stendhal's Racine and Shakespeare is the emphasis on narodnost'. Drama's origins in the public square mean that, Antaeus-like, it must come back to its earthy beginnings to take strength.[25]

According to Puškin, narodnost' lends to the drama a pattern of ideas and feelings, a myriad of habits, beliefs and customs pertaining exclusively to a given people. In this way, the content inspires the forms and component structures of the drama.

Puškin suggests, in effect, a reversal of the traditional workings of drama. As it leaves the public square and becomes the property of a cultured state, it begins 'to control passions and the human soul.' The drama must now be controlled again by its content. The quest for 'verisimilitude,' which is to replace the enlightenment concepts of 'beauty and utility,' is synonymous with '*freedom*' (Puškin's italics), and implies an imaginative resurrection of an age in all its veracity.[26] This 'truth' includes 'indignation, horror, differences of opinion, confusion:' in short, a spectrum of reactions, events, emotions and personalities. Although Puškin does not address the matter of closure, we may yet conclude that the diffusion he praises is not condensed into a single, cohesive point of arrival.

The 'Petersburg Notes for 1836' of Nikolai Gogol' and his parodic play, A Theatre Lets Out after the Performance of a New Comedy (pr. 1842, perf. 1902), serve to affirm and extend Puškin's fragmentary statements; in a sense, his assertions serve as a brilliant summary of the romantic aesthetic of 'unity in multeity.' Indirectly, Gogol' condemns in the 'Petersburg Notes' what has, at the time of writing, proved to be a major direction of the romantic drama and the concurrent development of melodrama, and argues for a movement away from the sensationalized themes of popular Romanticism. What he advocates is not a rejection of 'unity in multeity' but a partial return to the many-sided dimensions of 'Byron's lyre.'[27] The 'dark and light' polarities which infuse life and, ideally, art should be resurrected. Not a frenetic ordering of the discordant ('the infrequent, the exceptional, the breath-takingly horrid, discordant amid concord,' PN, p. 21) with a view toward creating a final 'overwrought state' in the spectator, but an articulate rendering, 'in all its profusion, with all its harmony, clear as a mirror, reflecting with equal clarity both dark and light clouds' (PN, p. 21), represents the aim of art and, by extension, of the ending.

The brief comedy of Gogol', A Theatre Lets Out, addresses the problem of closure more directly than in the Notes. Much has been made of Bertolt Brecht's statement, 'Den Vorhang zu und alle Fragen offen,' in the conclusion of Der gute Mensch von Sezuan.[28] The problems of the drama are, with this ending, left with the audience. Less didactically than Brecht, the Romantics, including Gogol', view the 'incompleteness' of the ending as an essential component of the drama. If any 'dénouement' exists, Gogol' implies in his comedy, it is not appended to the drama, but arrived at later in the mind of the spectator:

> Second. That's perfectly natural. Inner meaning is always apprehended afterwards. And the more vivid, the clearer-cut the images in which it is enshrouded and fragmented, the longer general attention will linger on those images. Only by piecing them together will you derive the sum total and meaning of a work of art. But not everyone can analyze and decode such ciphers rapidly, reading them all at once and on the run, for a long time people will see nothing but the ciphers (A Theatre, p. 50).

From a double viewpoint, that of romantic closure in general, and that of Romanticism in its later stages, Gogol's analysis is significant. His critical statements confirm one direction of both literary and popular closure: toward sensational climactic structure and content. Concurrently, a partial reorientation of closure toward symbolism on the one side, and toward the evocation of social criticism on the other ('In the hands of a skilled physician both hot and cold water can effect cures of the same ailments with equal success' [A Theatre, p. 35]) indicates a movement beyond Romanticism.

With the theoretical writings of the Spanish Romantics the contradictions between theory and practice are particularly evident. From the Enlightenment stems the frequently-voiced idea that pleasure and utility are the aims of literature. This precept is combined as well with a belief in poetry's role in the future development of society.[29] On the one side, pessimism and a glorification of the rebel against God and society lend little positive stability to dramatic closure; on the other, 'doch gaben sie keine theoretische Rechtfertigung für den Gehalt ihrer pessimistischen Werke; vielmehr bekundeten auch sie den Glauben an den Fortschritt, also an den Sinn der Geschichte, bzw. sie hielten an den Prinzipien des Christentums fest.'[30]

Concurrently, the idealistic aspects of Romanticism, marked by a glorified vision of the past to be duplicated and expanded in a future millennium, are in Spain as elsewhere in Europe counterbalanced by a focus on the totality of the poetic vision, attention to historical detail, the psychological complexity of character, and the untoward workings of fate--all factors which tend to undo the traditional stability and harmony of the ending. Juan Donoso Cortés' Discurso de Apertura en Cáceres (1829) maintains that the drama should portray 'total' characters, blend fantastic and subjective elements with the reality of historical situations, and portray the 'iron hand' of fate amid the hazards of life.[31] The view of fate, at first mixed with that of Christian redemption, later graduates in the works of this Romantic to a preoccupation with horror, the Satanic, and unbridled passion. The contradiction between theory and practice once more reveals itself with Mariano José de Larra, who in his article Literatura (1836) hails, in Hugolian terms, a new literature for a new society. The contrast between this idealism and the antisocial pessimism emerging from the ending of his drama Macías (1834) is striking. Larra affirms, if somewhat obliquely, a belief in the practice of equivocal, unresolved closure. His emphasis on historical detail, like that of Donoso Cortés and, more than a decade earlier, Manzoni, and his contention that reality should be portrayed not as it should be but as it is, suggest that the dramatic intrigue should not be tailored toward a single, resolved point of arrival. By way of contrast, Martínez de la Rosa's critical preface to La Conjuración de Venecia (1834) argues for movement, life, subjectivity, and conflicting emotions along with an awareness of historical detail.[32] In general, however, the theoretical statements of Spanish Romanticism reconfirm our argument that the practice of closure supersedes in relability and importance the suggestions derived from theory.

Although the theoretical writings of the Romantics provide us with indications that both the structure and content of dramatic closure will diverge from those of preceding eras, only the scrutiny of dramatic texts will support the establishment of an international typology. As the foregoing survey of closure in the history of drama as intimated, the transformation of closural structures and functions is in large part an outgrowth of the romantic Weltanschauung and its aesthetics rather than the self-conscious application of a program. The scarcity of authorial annotations or critical commentaries dealing specifically with the ending bears out such an assumption. While Shakespeare and Calderón are hailed by the Romantics as the typological precursors of the new drama, the uncanny ability of literature to shake itself free from its own models is revealed by the distinctive features of romantic closure. At the same time, the closural structures of the serious drama in the first half of the nineteenth century must not be viewed in isolation. Not only do they often parallel certain aspects of baroque and Elizabethan closure, but also they continue the developments already set in motion in the later eighteenth century.

Within the Romantic Movement itself, the search for unity must not overshadow an awareness of multeity. Although our study is founded on the assertion that a European-wide typology of romantic closure can be established, room must be left for departures from widespread tendencies. Particularly in the early phases of its development, the romantic drama evinces a wavering between tradition and innovation. While German

Romanticism in the wake of the Sturm und Drang movement has already moved on with considerable certainty to new structures and functions of closure, the first steps of the British and French romantic drama are highly tentative. The Russian and Polish drama, less hemmed in by a pseudo-classicist tradition, evince an instinctive willingness to adapt form to content, while Italian romantic dramas, in spite of various attempts to incorporate dynamic closure, tend to suffer from a stiffness of dialogue and a static focus on their protagonists, as in Manzoni's Carmagnola and his later Adelchi (1822). By way of contrast, Spanish romantic dramatists incorporate the 'climactic' closure already dominant in the French theatre, and employ it to reflect their awareness of audience demands for sensational content.

That one type of closure may predominate in one language group and be of secondary importance in another attests to the Protean qualities of a complex movement. Genre and the dramatist's relationship with the contemporary stage must be kept in mind. In a culture where the popular stage and the 'literary' dramatist have a close working relationship, theatrically effective closure will be a major consideration; in other instances, where the writer is alienated from the theatre of his age, the drama will address itself to an elite reading public; the ending, correspondingly, will be aimed at a 'mental stage,' and not at a stage hemmed in by the exigences of stagecraft, current acting methods, theatrical censorship, and the indiscriminate tastes of an unsophisticated audience. A drama aimed at a reading public will reflect in its ending an overall freedom of form, setting and content, with a mingling of epic and lyrical elements. In the episodic drama, where action, gestures and dialogue represent a loosely-linked series of states, the structure and content of closure will correspondingly be less focused than in a work where a suspenseful intrigue predominates. Similarly, an intrigue charged with tension and suspense will be less prone to disperse itself in a collage-like succession of fleeting images. Epic dramas with an elaborate tapestry representing the life and concerns of an era will seldom stop short with the resolution of the conflict involving a central character, but will move on to treat the larger social framework.

A study of the present nature deals therefore not only with closure in the serious romantic drama viewed in the context of previous movements. A diachronic relationship also connects works within Romanticism. The historical placement of a work within the early, middle, or late phases the movement will affect certain aspects of the outcome, such as the use of already familiar or stylized motifs, certain modifications of the ethos and the socio-political climate, or the demands of an aesthetic which stresses originality and imagination. For this reason, the awareness of chronology must be blended with the search for typologies.

## NOTES

[1] Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), pp. 64-5.

[2] Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenäumsfragment 116' in *Charakteristiken und Kritiken I (1796-1801)*, Vol. 2 of the *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler *et al.* (München: Schöningh, 1967), p. 182. Here, as throughout this chapter, the edition used will be identified in the first reference to a primary text; subsequently, references to the volume and page number of the edition cited will be incorporated in the body of the text.

[3] Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik: Kleine Nachschule zur ästhetischen Vorschule*, ed. Norbert Miller, afterword by Walter Höllerer (München: Hanser, 1963), p. 89.

[4] August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Giovanni Vittorio Amoretti (Bonn and Leipzig: Schroeder, 1923), II, p. 114.

[5] Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres esthétiques*, p. 241.

[6] Ludwig Tieck, *Kritische Schriften* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1852; rpt. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), III, pp. 44-5.

[7] See Heinrich von Kleist, 'Über das Marionettentheater,' in his *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in vier Bänden*, ed. Helmut Sembdner, 6th ed. (München: Hanser, 1977), III, pp. 338-45.

[8] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Lecture II, 1811-12: Dramatic Illusion,' in his *Shakespeare Criticism*, ed. T.M. Raysor (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1930), pp. 211-2.

[9] William Wordsworth, 'Preface' to the *Lyrical Ballads*, in his *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. Ernest de Selincourt, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1904; rpt. 1960), p. 735.

[10] Joanna Baillie, *Series of Plays in which It is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind*, First Series (London: Longman, 1798, rpt. 1806), I, p. 17, 38.

[11] P.B. Shelley, *The Complete Works*, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter Peck (London: Benn, 1965), VII, p. 121.

[12] Shelley, *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford Standard Authord (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 276.

[13] William Hazlitt, *Dramatic Essays* (*London Magazine*) in his *Collected Works*, ed. A.R. Waller and Arnold Glover, intro. W.E. Henley (London: Dent, 1903), IV, p. 419.

[14] René Wellek, *The Romantic Age*: Vol. II of his *History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955; rpt. 1968), p. 223.

[15] Mme de Staël, *De la littérature* in her *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1820), IV, p. 498.

[16] Benjamin Constant, *Wallstein: Tragédie en cinq actes et en vers*, ed. Jean-René Derré, Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres de Lyon (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, n.d.), p. 49.

[17] Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne* (Part One) in her *Oeuvres complètes*, X, p. 340.

[18] Prosper Mérimée, 'L'art dramatique en Espagne,' (Second Essay) in his *Oeuvres. Théâtre de Clara Gazul (1825-1830)*, intro. and ed. Pierre Trahard (Paris: Auber, n.d.), p. 19.

[19] Gerd Thieltges, *Bürgerlicher Klassizismus und romantisches Theater: Untersuchungen zu den frühen Dramen Prosper Mérimées, 1803-1870*, Kölner Romanistische Arbeiten, F.F. 44 (Genève: Droz, 1975), p. 299n.

[20] Victor Hugo, *Oeuvres complètes*, Chronological Edition, dir. Jean Massin (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1967), III, p. 50.

[21] Adam Oehlenschläger, 'Von dramatischer Poesie,' Chapter 7 of his 'Selbstbiographie,' in his *Werke* (Breslau: Max, 1839), I, p. 68. Although his theory postdates his major romantic dramas, Oehlenschläger yet belongs to an earlier generation than the Italian, Russian and Spanish Romantics treated in the present survey; hence the ordering of treatment.

[22] The translation of Antoine de Latour in Alessandro Manzoni, *Théâtre et poésies* (Paris: Delahayes, 1841), p. 114 attributes the article merely to the 'Lycée,' while René Wellek's *History of Modern Criticism*, II, p. 261, identifies the critic as Victor Chauvet.

[23] Wellek, II, pp. 261-2.

[24] Alessandro Manzoni, *Théâtre et poésies*, p. 116.

[25] *Russian Dramatic Theory from Pushkin to the Symbolists: An Anthology*, trans. and ed. Laurence Senelick, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 5 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. xxi; see also Lauren Leighton, *Russian Romanticism: Two Essays*, Slavic Printing and Reprintings, 295 (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), for a well-documented overview of *narodnost'* in Russian Romanticism.

[26] Puskin, 'On Narodnost' in Literature,' in *Russian Dramatic Theory*, p. xxi.

[27] Gogol', 'Petersburg Notes,' in *Russian Dramatic Theory*, p. 20.

[28] Brecht, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, in his *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1967), IV, p. 1607. See P. Pavis, *Dictionnaire du théâtre* under 'clôture,' p. 62, Oscar Lee Brownstein and Darlene Daubert, eds., *Analytical Sourcebook of Concepts in Dramatic Theory* (Westport: Greenwood, 1981), pp. 84-9, and Manfred Pfister, *Das Drama*, pp. 140-41 for illustrations of the emphasis placed on Brecht and the twentieth century as 'originators' of the unresolved ending.

[29] See Wolfram Krömer, 'Die Romantik in Spanien,' in *Die Europäische Romantik* (Frankfurt/M.: Athenäum, 1972), p. 277.

[30] Krömer, p. 277.

[31] Krömer, p. 286.

[32] Apart from Krömer, Enrique Piñeyro, *The Romantics of Spain*, trans. E. Allison Peers, Studies in Hispanic Literatures (Liverpool: Institute of Hispanic Studies, 1934), and Donald L. Shaw, *A Literary History of Spain: The Nineteenth Century* (London: Benn, 1972), pp. 1-36, have also been consulted.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Closure in the German Romantic Drama

### 1. Introductory

The final years of the eighteenth century are highlighted in the German states by a furor of literary discussion and speculation. In a sense, the German Romantics undergo their equivalent of the 'Bataille d'Hernani' over thirty years earlier than their French counterparts, and the spirit of excitement graphically described in Théophile Gautier's Histoire du romantisme (1874) has its precursor among the Jena Romantics. The topos of the solitary romantic poet tends to obscure the atmosphere of shared excitement in which the romantic drama developed. Among the Schlegel, Tieck, Novalis and Wackenroder circle in Jena, the works of Shakespeare, Calderón, Goethe and Schiller are read and discussed, joint publications launched, works read to one another and criticized well before publication, letters exchanged, theatrical presentations avidly followed and reviewed.[1]

An awareness of the eager interest of the German Romantics--as well of the English and French--in their contemporary stage will disperse two possible misconceptions: first, that they created 'unstageable' plays in ignorance of the workings of the theatre, and second, that at an early date they turned from the stage in disdain. Certainly, they were aware of the obstacles posed by popular demand and opinionated directors. Tieck's Der gestiefelte Kater (1797) and his later Die verkehrte Welt (1799) launch, in their satirical depictions of pseudo-enlightened audiences eager to lap uppmoral platitudes, spectacle, and maudlin sentiment, a pointed attack on the popular theatre. Without exception, the German Romantics express their dissatisfaction with the contemporary stage.[2] The popular sentimental-bourgeois dramatists Kotzebue and Iffland are singled out for special ridicule. A.W. Schlegel refers sarcastically to Kotzebue as 'unser größter Theaterdichter' and 'der Bühne Vater und Berater,'[3] while Friedrich Schlegel describes the 'ideal' popular drama:

> [Es] muß ein wenig von allem haben, eine Art Mikrokosmos sein. Ein wenig Unglück und ein wenig Glück, etwas Kunst und etwas Natur, die gehörige Quantität Tugend une eine gewisse Dosis Laster. Auch Geist mu drin sein nebst Witz, ja sogar Philosophie und vorzüglich Moral, auch Politik mitunter. Hilft eine Ingredienz nicht, so kann vielleicht das andere helfen. Und gesetzt auch, das Ganze konnte nicht helfen, so konnte es doch auch, wie manche darum immer zu lobende Medizin, wenigstens nicht schaden.[4]

Schlegel's sketch of the content of the popular bourgeois drama, or the 'comédie larmoyante,' focuses shrewdly on the hallmarks of the stage play inspired by the dramatic example of Lillo, Diderot, Beaumarchais, and Lessing, among others, and the sentimental novel of the Richardson school, thereby centering upon the common Erwartungshorizont. Diversion and reinforcement of a conservative ethos emerge as the aims of the popular drama.[5]

The German Romantics, therefore, do not aim at spurning the theatre and resetting the drama in lofty isolation; rather, they attack a tradition they consider limiting and outworn by attempting to go beyond it. That this effort at creating an alternative drama leads to unstageable works, to dramas of the vast scope of Tieck's Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva (wr. 1799, pr. 1800), and to bizarre creations such as Achim von Arnim's Halle und Jerusalem (1811), which moves from the depiction of riotous student life to a soulful trek in quest of spiritual purification in Jerusalem, is symptomatic of an aesthetic program which admits no limitations of time, place, and action, and does not view the dramatic plot as an orderly staggering of tension, followed by resolution.

Few attempts have been made at a comprehensive examination of the German drama of this period. As Gerhard Kluge observes in a brief article, 'Das Drama der deutschen Romantik ist, ausgenommen die Komödie, für sich bislang kaum Gegenstand von wissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen geworden; es liegt sogar im ganzen noch nicht einmal in hinreichenden Editionen vor.'[6] The dismissive comments of Hettner, who refers to 'das blasierte Zwittergeschöpf, das Lesedrama,' and of Glyn Hughes, who states that 'the relatively dismal history of Romantic drama' is only worthy of passing attention, are separated by well over a century;[7] nevertheless, while the dramatic theory of the German Romantics has been a recurrent subject of study, an attempt at closely examining the themes, genres, and structures of their dramatic output is significantly lacking, and may still indicate the power of negative value judgements.[8]

The textual-critical problem is compounded by the indeterminacy of the corpus. Once more Gerhard Kluge's query is relevant, although his own study does not depart from the limited number of works dubbed 'romantic' by traditional German literary historians:

> Wohin, um von Kleist und Hölderlin gar nicht zu reden, mit Platen? mit den Dramen der Trivialromantik, mit Houwald, Müllner? Wohin mit Schillers 'romantischem Trauerspiel?' wohin mit dem Schicksalsdrama? Sind nicht die Libretti für die Opern von Weber und Marschner genauso romantisches Drama, und wie weit erstreckt es sich noch ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein? Endet es mit Arnim und Eichendorff oder nicht doch erst 1882 mit Wagners 'Parsifal?' Erfüllt es sich nicht überhaupt als Musikdrama?[9]

In addition, one could ask where Büchner, Grabbe, and Lenau should fall, and where to place the Austrian dramas of J. v. Collin, Grillparzer, Raimund, and Nestroy. At the same time, to recall Mme de Staël's eclecticism in De l'Allemagne (1810), where Wieland, Klopstock, Lessing, Winckelmann, Goethe, Schiller and Werner represent German Romanticism, along with Tieck, Jean Paul, the Schlegels and Novalis, creates an even greater embarras de richesse. No definitive verdict, if one even exists, is here proposed. Rather, our study errs on the side of Staël sooner than that of the German critical establishment. Only an excess of adulation, it appears, can have led to the solitary enthronement of Goethe's Faust I (1808) as a classicist drama. Although the reasons for inclusion and exclusion of certain works would demand a lengthy study in themselves, two flexible guidelines are here employed: first, a historical framework, whereby Romanticism spans from the final half dozen years of the eighteenth century to dwindle in the 1840's in German literature, if not in music and the plastic arts; and second, the philosophical and typological guidelines arrived at from a European comparative perspective by critics such as Paul van Tieghem, René Wellek, M.H. Abrams, H.HH.Remak, Hans Eichner, Ernst Behler, and, most recently, Norbert Miller.[10] Concerning individual 'marginal' dramatists, some grounds will be given in the course of the study for their inclusion.

### 2. Popular contemporaries

Before we move to the closural structures and functions of early dramas by Tieck, Hölderlin, Friedrich Schlegel and Kleist, a handful of popular dramatists should be mentioned. The bourgeois drama of the era is represented by three major figures: Friedrich Ludwig Schroeder, August Wilhelm Iffland, and August von Kotzebue. All three are actively involved with the practical aspects of the contemporary theatre as actors and directors, and thus intimately aware of public demands. Similarly, Joseph Babo, Friedrich Beck, and Friedrich Hagemann are also professional men of the theatre, while Otto von Gemmingen and Joseph von Törring, although aristocrats, pursue theatre as a sideline. Their aim, as Kotzebue expresses it in the foreword to *Der Graf von Burgund* (pr. 1798), is clear: 'Die Würkung meiner Stücke ist hauptsächlich für die Bühne berechnet . . . und aus diesem Gesichtspunkte sollte man sie beur0 theilen; aber das will man nicht.'[11]

At the same time, the popular drama shares certain elements with the literary drama. In both England and France, Kotzebue especially is seized upon as a German Romantic, and British translations and adaptations of his dramas are almost without exception labelled 'romantic.' The sentimental focus, exotic setting, exaltation of the rustic over the urban, suffering heroines and solitary misanthropists, and the mixing of serious content with comic all reveal a certain typological affinity with Romanticism.[12] With reference to closure, the relevant question is to what extent popular forms of the drama have either absorbed or influenced the ending structures and functions of romantic drama.

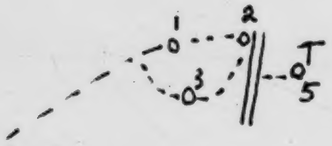
On the eve of German Romanticism and throughout its early years, popular closure practice still reflects the sentimental and didactic emphases of the sentimental drama, and the concluding tableaux still depict family scenes of blissful harmony and rejoicing. Hauffen summarises:

> Der Ausgang der bürgerlichen Dramen ist immer ein befriedigender. Ein rascher Glückswechsel, eine Erbschaft, eine plötzliche Nachgiebigkeit des Vaters, eine unvermutete Besserung des Sohnes, Entdeckungen unbekannter Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse und Zufälle verschiedener Art führen eine Wendung zum Bessern, eine Lösung des geschürzten Knotens herbei.[13]

Financial security forms part of the bourgeois ethic: relatives may arrive at a convenient time bearing riches, as in Schroeder's *Vetter in Lissabon* (1775) and Kotzebue's *Die Verwandtschaften* (1775). Alongside the pattern of the 'joyful surprise' is that of an invocation of patriotism. In the ending of both the bourgeois drama and the 'Ritterstück' (chivalresque drama), a fervent address is frequently made: as in von Törring's *Agnes Bernauerinn* (1780), which suggests that love of country (Bayern) supersedes and triumphs over personal loss, and Babo's *Otto von Wittelsbach* (1782), where it is prophesied that Bavaria and the German people will sing the praises of the dead hero. The impassioned rhetoric of these ending tags distinguishes them, however, from earlier drama and the conventional expansion of tragic vision to include the state. Instead of falling back into calm, these later endings rise to a pronounced pitch of enthusiasm.

The content of the ending is, however, joined to structure, an aspect which critical works on the popular German theatre in the Pre-romantic and Romantic Eras fail to mention. Kotzebue's immensely successful drama, *Menschenhaß und Reue* (wr. and perf. 1787, pr. 1789) will illustrate closure in the 'bürgerliches Rührstück' of the years immediately preceding the first dramatic experiments of the romantic generation. The intrigue of Kotzebue's drama is clearly and neatly knit, in spite of the side-diversions provided by stock characters, comic episodes, and picturesque frills. The theme deals with a social issue: a woman, married at an early age to a stern and reserved man, is duped into eloping with his false friend. Now, repentant and a paragon of virtue, she lives in seclusion and, unknown to her, her husband -- now a misanthropic recluse -- rents a cottage nearby. Thanks to the intervention of a selfless mutual friend, a meeting of the pair is arranged -- the introductory motif of the ending. The wife, still overcome by remorse and shame, and the husband, unable to reconcile honour in the eyes of society with love, see no possibility of reunion, and reluctantly exchange farewells 'auf ewig!'[14] Here, however, a sudden but not totally unexpected event acts as the second introductory motif to cancel the incipient final situation, replacing it with a happy one. The two children of the broken marriage are led out of concealment, and their parents, overcome by this intervention, embrace first the children and then each other with words of forgiveness. With this final dynamic motif, the ending dispenses with a commentary and gives way to a tableau of family harmony.

The structure of Menschenhaß und Reue is thus an offshoot of and a movement away from the earlier practice of Diderot. Tension and surprise are maintained in the brief ending by dynamic motifs, and as soon as the final situation emerges, the play is ended -- a structure which, in spite of the vast differences in theme and ethos, recalls the closure practice of Calderón in La Devoción de la cruz (1643). Kotzebue's ending may be summarised as follows:



1. introductory-determinant motif to the ending
2. the incipient ending resulting from motif no. 1.
3. tributary motif joins plot to function as a second introductory-determinant motif to shift the preliminary final situation (2) to a new and positive one: hence the break and repositioning of (5), the resultant final situation, closing with a tableau (T).

(Note: The insertion of a second introductory-determinant motif creates a structure also similar to the deus ex machina: e.g. Orestes)

While Kotzebue is not a romantic dramatist except on the superficial level of common motifs, his closural structures as exemplified by Menschenhaß und Reue serve as a point of comparison and contrast for romantic closure. Prior mention should, however, be made of one drama by another central figure of the first generation of German romantics. August Wilhelm Schlegel's Ion (perf. and pr. 1802) provides the somewhat surprising phenomenon of a classicist drama by a foremost exponent of the romantic drama. Modelled after Goethe's first fully-fledged classicist drama, Iphigenie (1779-86, wr. and rev; pr. 1787; perf. 1802), and based upon Euripedes' tragedy of the same name, Ion is so self-consciously classical in its structure that it rejects even the deus ex machina ending of the original. The drama is resolved from within, and a lengthy commentary sums up the final harmony. Only one dynamic element is inserted: the curtain falls to thunder and lightning.[15] A general movement away from the silent repose of the ending with the growing elaboration of stage directions is thus reaffirmed.

## 3. The Early Years: Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel, Hölderlin and Kleist

When we turn to the work of four early romantic dramatists (Ludwig Tieck, Der Abschied [1792], Karl von Berneck [1795], Das Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva [wr. 1799, pr. 1800], and of peripheral relevance in an examination of serious drama, his Märchenspiele; Friedrich Hölderlin's three fragments from the projected Tod des Empedokles [1797-99]; Friedrich Schlegel's Alarcos [wr., perf. pr. 1802], and Heinrich von Kleist's Die Familie Schroffenstein [1803]), we find already a wide spectrum of dramatic forms and closural structures. On the surface little appears to distinguish these dramas--with the exception of Tieck's Lustspiele--with their age-old conflicts between the demands of the individual and the superior, intransigent forces of fate from tragedies such as Oedipus Rex where, in spite of the efforts of a larger-than-life protagonist to control his destiny, his will is defeated from without by a network of divinely-ordained circumstances and events, and from within, by the so-called tragic flaw. Tragedy is separated from disaster on three grounds in the traditional tragedy: the power of the victim's struggle, his eventual ability to draw himself spiritually if not physically unbroken from the shambles of his conflict, regenerated by the knowledge gained from his experience, and the physical and spiritual regeneration of the society he represents.

At this point, the distance between these early romantic dramas and their precursors sets in. Fate, on the one hand, is no longer a distinctly separate force with an extra-terrestrial base, making its consequences felt on a worldly level. Rather, it has infused itself on many mysterious levels. Supposedly inanimate nature and even seemingly unexceptional phenomena are voices of fate. A type of 'vision hallucinatoire'[16] exists, whereby the environment takes on the feelings and fears of man, and simultaneously impells and reflects his actions. Nature is, in this way, no longer a material piece of stage property where the dictates of divine directors may be carried out. Rather, it has on many levels become stage, actor, and director. This complexity does not restrict itself to the extra-human level. Within the human psyche there also exist conflict and antithetical forces. In an extension of the tragic flaw, the romantic protagonist is divided between mutually antagonistic compulsions, one of which eventually predominates and becomes identical with the victim's 'fate.' Impelled in the vortex of an unleashed impulse, the protagonist(s) of each of the above-mentioned dramas ceases to be a differentiated individual and becomes, in a manner of speaking, the embodiment of his fate. In Der Abschied, the sinister events prefigured in nature and lurking within the psyche of Karl Waller are let loose. The protagonist becomes murderous jealousy and is himself the agent of the fate visited upon his household. In Karl von Berneck, the curse stemming from earlier family transgression ruptures the new-found reconciliation of the brothers Berneck so that the hero becomes simultaneously the embodiment of the negative fate, its executioner, and its victim.

The identity of fate and victim is further exemplified by Tieck's massive epic-lyrical drama, Genoveva. Here fate is first a signal or mood stemming from nature, song, and deathly premonition. Swept along by opposing impulses, the anti-hero Golo undergoes a progressive moral, mental and spiritual disintegration that bears out the ill omens of his bastard origins. Simultaneously, Genoveva's journey to sainthood involves a progressive movement away from the material and a mystic disintegration of matter into spirit. This is, as Gerhard Kluge justly observes, 'nicht die Überwindung des Lebens durch den Tod, sondern die Überwindung des Todes.'[17] Equally extreme is the union of man and fate in Hölderlin's three Empedokles fragments. Doomed by his genius to a separate existence among people, and blighted with spiritual dearth by reason of his limited human existence, the hero cedes to the former 'fate' and overcomes the latter by a step into 'darkness' or death, which paradoxically leads to the light of total vision in 'reine Geist.' In Friedrich Schlegel's Alarcos, however, the union with fate emerges as a journey downward to an individual and social abyss. Alarcos is a 'Trauerspiel' in the most literal sense, being a drama of unmitigated grief. Tension has once more virtually disappeared as the basically passive hero hurtles forward to what he knows fully is an avalanche of destruction of self, family and state. Finally, Kleist's earliest published drama, Die Familie Schroffenstein, has fate, incorporated by the actual chaos of a seemingly ordered world, as its protagonist (or, more accurately, 'agonist,' agent of action) and man, its blundering follower and victim, as its dupe. The family, a collective antihero, blindly slides downward to disaster, experiencing afterward a reinstatement of understanding which is in itself a persiflage.

The significance of the reordering of fate and character in the German Romantic Era is, as Gerhart Kluge astutely but briefly affirms, both major and precursory to the modern age, especially with reference to closure.

> Es erscheint wenig sinnvoll, von Läuterungs- oder Erlösungsdramen zu sprechen, vergegenwärtigt man sich die Finalszenen dieser Dramen. In ihnen akzeptieren die Menschen ihr Schicksal. Die Dramen zeigen, wie sie diesem zuzuwachsen, mit ihm identisch zu werden beginnen. Rudolf Kassner beobachtete dieses an Dramen des 19. Jahrhunderts. Die Menschen im romantischen Drama verlieren auf diese Weise und dadurch, daß sie von sich selbst nicht mehr sittliche Rechenschaft fordern, die Autonomie des Willens im Handeln. So ist das romantische Drama, legt man einmal seine dramatischen Keime frei, geistesgeschichtlich eine höchst bemerkenswerte Übergangserscheinung zwischen dem anthropozentrischen Drama der Klassik, vor allem Schillers, und dem Drama des 19. Jahrhunderts bzw. der Moderne.[18]

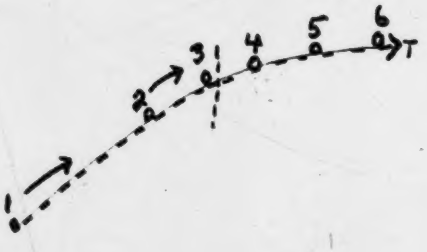
The above citation has hinted that the 'Finalszenen' confirm this reorientation of the drama. Our assertion here goes a step beyond: not only thematically, but also structurally, the German romantic drama joins with a European-wide movement to revise the structures and functions of dramatic closure, sounding, at the same time, typological echoes from the foregoing Western literary tradition. An ironic reminder that romantic theoreticians and dramatists may be themselves unaware of their accomplishment lies in Friedrich Schlegel's assertion that the resolution of Christian drama (and hence romantic) represents 'aus allem Tod und Leiden ein neues Leben' and 'die Verklärung des innern Menschen.'[19] A certain critical scepticism is a necessary prelude for the study of closure in the romantic drama.

Tieck's Der Abschied, although it precedes the formation of the first romantic coterie in Jena by a number of years, will serve from a chronological perspective as the first romantic drama selected for our study of closure. In this welding of the bürgerliches Trauerspiel with elements of Gothic horror, Tieck reveals a precociously original juvenile talent, departing from the lachrymose and moralistic endings of his popular precursors. In one sense, Der Abschied is indeed 'end-directed.' A sinister atmosphere progressively deepens in external nature and the mind and actions of man. Preliminary hints that the protagonist, Karl Waller, has a passionate and violent nature are confirmed. The ending is an ironic realisation of a question jokingly posed by the wife, Louise, near the beginning of the drama: 'Du willst mich doch nicht gar des Bildes wegen erstechen?'[21] Karl has just asked for a knife to cut an apple, and has surprised his wife sighing over her ex-suitor's portrait which, at this time, he still believes is that of her dead brother. The inanimate world of objects has, in this way, already taken up a symbolic and practical significance, later to be developed to its fullest in the 'Schicksalstragödie.'

The first introductory-situational motif coincides with a pinnacle of foreboding on the part of the wife and her visiting ex-lover, and demented fury on the part of Karl Waller. A passive fatalism, however, paralyses the action of the characters. Although apparitions of death surround the guest in his room, he makes no attempt to escape, just as the husband is incapable of battling his jealousy. Waller's decision to commit murder and his taking up of the fateful knife carelessly left beside the apple lead to the first dynamic motif of the ending: the murder of the ex-lover. Tension, however, does not decrease once the first consequence of the situational motif has been established. Louise, spurred on to fury, denounces her husband, while his emotions range from relatively cold detachment to remorse to renewed fury, culminating in the murder of his wife. Even after this second major dynamic motif of the sequel, stasis does not prevail. Karl's psyche continues to swing wildly back and forth: in an outburst of tenderness (mixed, possibly, with a desire to dictate the course of events), he convinces himself that his wife's wound is not fatal; cold-blooded wrath once more prevails. In the final action of the drama, after Louise's death, a new and unexpected component is introduced: intoxicated by the sense of power at having determined the fate of two people, Karl resolves to hold a solitary wake in the house of death, a victor presiding over the field of slaughter: 'Hier will ich sitzen bleiben -- hier will ich thronen, wie der Sieger auf dem Schlachtfelde! -- Tod! Tod! -- ' (II, [I, V], p. 326) This climactic outcry concludes the verbal part of the drama. Stage instructions follow: 'Er sieht stumm auf die Leiche. Der Vorhang fällt.' With the fixing and immobilising of the final stance, the ending concurrently illustrates both climactic and tableau structures of closure. Emotion is sustained and held at a furious peak; no repentance, reconciliation, or prospect of justice emerges. While the receiver is fully aware that Karl cannot maintain this pose indefinitely, the character's eventual fate is left suspended. No cathartic release, no distancing from the macabre events by means of detached commentary and moral warning are incorporated. Rather, the eye of the spectator is fixed upon the grotesquely superhuman pose of Karl. The tableau is, on the one hand, merely a stage in a shifting series of contradictory impulses; on the other, it freezes and fixes action in full intensity, symbolising violence, uncertainty, and a huis clos situation which, paradoxically, is bound to break as abruptly as it has occurred.

Yet another distinctive feature in the context of dramatic tradition lies in the ending's interiorised focus. The ego, pose, and actions of one character are set in relief.

A schematic representation highlights the structural differences between the climactic-tableau ending and traditional closure:



1 → Initial situation, exposition, building of conflict.

2 → Arrival of ex-suitor; he is recognised; violence mounts.

3 ⋮ Determinant motif: decision to murder--beginning of ending.

4 : Dynamic motif 1. of ending: murder of guest; acts as second situational motif to lead conflict on.

5 : Second major dynamic motif of ending: murder of wife.

6 → Conflict continues within protagonist; climaxes in macabre glorification of death and final tableau. Husband's fate, future actions left open, hence →.

Other dramas by Tieck, to which only brief reference can here be made, continue the dramatist's innovative closure practice. Karl von Berneck (1795) combines the Orestes myth with the traditional Sturm und Drang theme of fraternal rivalry. The injection of a fatal family curse, however, provides the ending with an untoward twist of intrigue. One of the two brothers, Karl, has slain his adulterous mother and her lover. The brothers' rivalry for the hand of a woman ensues. With the end of the feud and the seeming reestablishment of harmony, the family ghost appears and causes Karl, in an echo of the Virginius motif and Emilia Galotti, to beg his brother to kill him. After the spurious harmony of the impending situation, a circular about-turn from harmony to the initial negative situation - the disaster predicted by the family curse - and to renewed grief is accomplished. The structure is thus circular, whereby the ending represents a return to the chaos of the beginning, and climactic, whereby a sudden renewed tension of intrigue ruptures harmony and stasis. Once more, as in Kotzebue's Menschenhaß und Reue and in Der Abschied, double introductory-situational motifs lead first to a preliminary ending and next, by means of an abrupt redirection, to a final situation, devoid of commentary.

Tieck's major comedies, Der gestiefelte Kater (1797), Die verkehrte Welt (wr. 1798, pr. 1799), and Zerbino, oder die Reise nach dem guten Geschmack (1799), are of special significance even in an examination of closure in the serious drama, for they indicate that the idea of closure in Tieck is both tentative and illusory. The theatre is not only a locus for the representation of fictional events, but a particle of the larger world theatre, where illusion and reality are involved in a constant ebb and flow, and where the world of the spectator carries over into that of the stage, and that of the stage is capable of bounding at any moment into the non-fictional world beyond the stage.[22] While this theme is not an unfamiliar one in world literature, an essential difference exists in past and present employment.[23] The dream-theatre of Calderón's La Vida es Sueña (1634-5), for instance, gives way to a final and stable reality once illusion (i.e. life) is shattered. Death and the afterlife are the central reality behind the masquerade of the world theatre. Tieck's comedies, however, trace a spiralling path in their constantly renewed process of the making and breaking of illusion. The ending is infused with the same ambiguities and the same Protean shifting of perspective, along with a maintenance of action, as the entire cosmic theatre.

All three comedies satirise conventional closure practice in both the comedy and the serious drama. Only when the Besänftiger (literally, the 'placator' or 'soother') treads forth in Der gestiefelte Kater to sing a song of idealism and joy in the finale--the tune is borrowed from Die Zauberflöte, an opera which to Tieck epitomises sentimental bourgeois taste--and a picturesque spectacle, portraying the benign influence of the gods, is presented, does the depicted audience temporarily cease its complaints.[24] This episode serves as a mockery of the contrived 'happy ending' of the popular school of Iffland and Kotzebue, as well as of the general dramatic tradition of reinstated harmony and heavenly intervention in the final scene. One is led to ask if the Besänftiger is not a personification of the soothing ending.

Even more directly, Die verkehrte Welt undoes the traditional concept of beginning, middle and end. By reversing the epilogue and prologue, and by terminating the drama with an ongoing battle between the romantic forces of Apollo and the rationalist legions of Skaramuz, the suggestion emerges that mere chronological sequence creates no definitive outcome or interpretation. As the *Tempo primo* -- a playful incorporation of the romantic ideal of fusing the arts -- states in the epilogue, beginning, past, present and future have an uncanny ability to fuse, and 'darum kann ich das War und Ist und sein Wird in einem Zauber binden' (MuD, p. 274). Similarly, *Zerbino* goes so far as to illustrate this reversibility of time at one point by replaying, or rather, inverting the order of events. Its ending, moreover, exemplifies in a comic context the category that has, in our terminology, been called the 'ironic reversal,' whereby apparent reconciliation denotes rejection and an ironic mockery of apparently reconciled order. Upon Zerbino's return to his court, he finds Enlightenment forces in firm control and, indicative of the current level of intellectual perspicacity, his dog Stallmeister appointed court pedagogue. When the hero audaciously ridicules this state of affairs, he is imprisoned, and released only after a declaration that poetry is folly and the Englightenment admirable. In this way, the drama closes with an ironic *pointe*, and seeming harmony is, with the mock stability of the ending, rendered ludicrous.

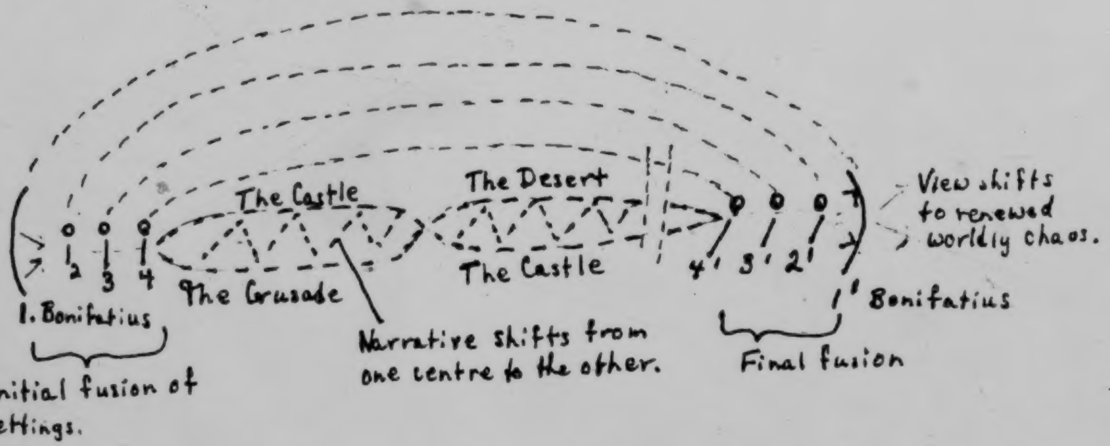
The 'Trauerspiel' completed in 1799 (pr. 1800), *Das Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva*, represents one formal direction taken by European romantic drama: the loosely-linked episodic drama which intermingles, in its vast sweep over time, space, character and situation, lyrical components with epic scope. Although Marianne Thalmann claims that Tieck's drama represents 'die Entdeckung der epischen Impulse für das Drama,' (MuD, 'Nachwort,' p. 884), it lacks the predominant forward-motion of the traditional epic, and tends rather, somewhat like Brecht's Mutter Courage (1939), to spotlight time-fragments against a vast but vague background. To speak of 'closure' as the emergence of a final situation is thus not entirely relevant. Rather, the drama demands a thematic subdivision, marked by the appearances of St. Boniface as narrator-commentator. The saint first delivers the prologue, and appears a second time after Genoveva's banishment into the desert to recount the seven years of her sojourn. The drama thus falls into two thematic parts: the first, a set of collage-fragments dealing with the husband's departure, Golo's attempted seduction of the heroine, the formation of the plot to make her appear an adulteress, imprisonment, sentencing to death, and flight into the desert; the second, her reinstatement and death, her husband and son's progression toward an ascetic life, and the heroine's sanctification. In the final collage-fragment, the framework of St. Boniface's appearance parallels the initial scene.

In this staggering juxtaposition of epic and lyrical scenes and proliferation of side intrigues, it is virtually impossible to speak of dynamic and bound motifs which, through their causal-temporal interaction, direct the narrative forward to a distinct introductory motif, sequel and commentary. This drama thus represents the most radical reworking of dramatic form and of closural structure encountered thus far in the course of this study. In the Genoveva-drama, it is more relevant to speak of thematic clusters ranged in a wide chronological framework. Tieck himself affirms that he has distanced himself from conventional dramatic forms,

> um größeren Raum zu gewinnen, um einige Stellen ganz musikalisch, andere ganz malerisch behandeln zu können ... und das Ganze durch Prolog und Epilog in einem poetischen Rahmen traumähnlich festgehalten und auch wieder verflüchtigt werden, um auf keine andre Wahrheit, als die poetische, durch die Phantasie gerechtfertigte, Anspruch zu machen...(I, pp. xxix-xxx).

A diagrammatic summary of the thematic progression will illustrate the difference between this drama and those structured along conventional lines.

Motifs 1 and 1': The Chapel (prayer); crusade//pilgrimage
2 2': Freies Feld (Golo's leit-motif - death song)
3 3': Genoveva's premonitions of death //actual death
4 4': Separation after union//reunion after separation (but in face of imminent death)


The Castle
The Desert
View shifts to renewed worldly chaos.
1. Bonifatius
2
3
4
The Crusade
The Castle
4'
3'
2'
1' Bonifatius
Initial fusion of settings.
Narrative shifts from one centre to the other.
Final fusion

In the above schema, the collage-clusters of lyrical 'Krisengespräche,' (MuD, 'Nachwort,' p. 884) chance occurrences, servants' gossip, and fleeting side-intrigues have of necessity been blended in with the general thematic progression. Placement of the 'beginning of the ending' shortly after the second appearance of St. Bonifatius is supported by geographical setting as well as by thematic development. The line of action, as the diagram reveals, is single only in the beginning, shortly before Siegfried's departure for battle. This suggests a state of wholeness and initial harmony within the psyche of the characters as well as in the focus of action. A double strand of development, characterised by shifts from one major locus (the castle) to the other (the crusade) reinforces the division of characters, both among themselves and within themselves. At one point only do the main lines of narrative cross without, however, interfusing: Genoveva's flight from persecution and imminent death coincides with her husband's movement homeward. The castle, previously the locus of the physical/spiritual love conflict between Golo and Genoveva, and of the antitheses of amoral nature twisted into evil, symbolised by Golo, and of Godly nature striving to attain the purely spiritual, represented by Genoveva, now becomes the locus of blinded and alienated existence (Golo and Siegfried). Only when Golo's personal disintegration is nearly complete and when Siegfried has attained a state of relative enlightenment concerning the plot against his wife do the lines of narrative once more intersect in the ending. At this point beginning and ending are geographically and thematically linked as if in a series of concentric circles, or as if, in its outward movement, the ending inverts the beginning. In this way, the ending combines two structures: collage clusters, characteristic of the entire drama, and an elaboration of the circular. The final circle, joining preface with epilogue, forms the frame.

The framework, a throwback to medieval structure in its use of an expositor-narrator, highlights the simultaneous borrowing-from and reworking of tradition. The prologue has a triple function: it contains, within the saint's own life story, a prefiguration of Genoveva's experiences in the wilderness; it situates the drama in a somewhat atemporal context where past, present and future, life, death and rebirth are blended; and finally, by introducing the initial tableau of Siegfried praying in a chapel, leads the way into the narrative. Once the ending has spiralled toward ever-higher levels of commitment to transcendant values, it shifts to the outer frame. Unlike the medieval expositor-narrator, however, Bonifatius does not provide a set of narrative stepping-stones whereby the inner drama is linked with the concerns of the spectators; rather, he recasts the foregoing tale in a timeless legendary context. Only in the final stanza of the concluding lyric does the vision of transcendent heavenly glory fade, as the focus abruptly shifts from the heavenly to the earthly, and harmony is shattered by a reminder of conflict:

> Nun beten Fromme, wann sich Wetter türmen,
> Im harten Kampfe mit dem alten Drachen:
> *Ora pro nobis sancta Genoveva.*' (*MuD*, p. 552)

This final reminder of unending threat and conflict further serves to reinforce the circularity of structure by throwing the ending back to the level of earthly conflict.

Even more than from the perspective of structure, the content poses problems of fragmentary resolution. The shifting scenes of collage clusters have left many questions open, as Marianne Thalmann summarises:

> Das tragische Grundgefühl von Schuld und Sühne wird verneint. Man steht an Grenzen und Übergängen, vor richtigen und falschen Wegen, kaum vor sittlichen Entscheidungen. Das heißt, es gibt keinen Ausgleich. Wir bleiben bei dem Ja und Nein der Gegensätze stehen. . . . Wer von uns wird schuldig, wer bleibt schuldlos? Die Welt ist nicht gut und böse, sondern erschreckend mehrschichtig, was ungewöhnlich modern klingt. (MuD, p. 385)

Unlike Genoveva, Hölderlin's three Empedokles fragments restrict themselves to the mental-spiritual state of one person in a brief time of intense crisis. In view of the unfinished condition of the three versions (Erste Fassung, 1797; Zweite und Dritte, 1799), complex questions regarding the projected ending are multiplied rather than resolved by Hölderlin's prose outlines. This work has been included in a romantic set of texts by reason of the dialectical process embodied in its ethos, and its adaptation of a classical myth, which now no longer is an archetypal representation of man's conflict with a superior fate, but a rhetorical expression of an existential dilemma.

In the final words of the third scene (Act II, Erste Fassung) a particularly relevant question is asked: 'Wie wird das endigen?'[25] The content of the ending, along with the definitive ordering of the fragments, constitutes a major critical problem.[26] At least a partial answer to the controversy over the outcome may reside in approaching the dramatic fragments in the light of romantic closure. A somewhat daring assertion is possible: that Hölderlin's Empedokles neither invites nor requires an ending beyond what is already achieved in the first version. The difficulty of incorporating the suggested endings sketched in the Frankfurter Plan and the Plan der dritten Fassung may have impeded the progress of the work, as the impossibility of closing in a conventional manner, with an expansion from the individual to the communal in a public eulogy of the hero, become apparent. The two suggested endings of Empedokles tend to fix and immobilise the dialectical movement at the heart of the drama. They form, moreover, an anticlimactic adjunct to a climax which also acts as a point of arrival. Empedokles arrives at a major point of awareness:

> O darum wird das Leben dir so leicht,
> Daß du des Überwinders Freuden all
> In Einer vollen Tat am Ende fandest?
> Ich komme. Sterben? nur ins Dunkle ists
> Ein Schritt, und sehen möchst du doch, mein Auge!
>
> (1. Fassung, [II, vi]

This awareness, along with an impending achievement of pure spirit constitutes the hero's answer to his existential dilemma.

The tragedy itself, which has posed the necessity for the 'transcendence of life in death' decision, has occurred well before the beginning of the drama. A genius doomed to solitude, Empedokles has found himself in a society where art and nature cannot be joined in a permanent higher synthesis (Grund, p. 155). He thus suffers not only from his superior ability to see and feel, but also from the malaise of his age: 'So ist Empedokles ... das Resultat seiner Periode,' (Grund, p. 149). His alienated existence in a 'godless' (i.e. devoid of spirit) society is metaphorically a state of death:

> Allein zu sein,
> Und ohne Götter, ist der Tod. (1. Fassung, p. 85)

Death serves as a synthesis of subject and object, self and nature, sense and spirit. This movement toward a higher synthesis, however, rests on ambiguous grounds. Several questions voiced by characters with opposing points of view remain open. Pausanias, adopting his mentor's viewpoint, asks 'Was kann der Göttersohn? Unendlich trifft es den Unendlichen' (1. Fassung, p. 85). Delia, however, voicing the question of one who is not a 'Göttersohn,' suggests practically and simple-mindedly, 'Und ist die Welt doch hier so schön' and asks if it is not better 'bei Menschen froh zu weilen.' (1. Fassung, p. 84) An implied criticism emerges: whether, by repudiating the ongoing process whereby the sense of isolated being gives way to unity, and then once more disintegrates, 'so daß der vereinende Moment, wie ein Trugbild, sich immer mehr auflöst,' Empedokles has not been guilty of superbia, or 'das Übermaß der Innigkeit,' (*Grund*, p. 157). In this sense, he is himself to blame for his spiritual death. His solution, that of seeking union with nature through death, may be, as Hölderlin's 'Grund zum *Empedokles*' suggests, merely seeming ('Schein,' *Grund*, p. 156-7) -- a dictum which brings to mind the self-destruction of the poet in Shelley's *Alastor* (1816) once he has been possessed of the demon of solitude. As a result, the role of the ending as a prophecy or revelation, an impetus for a society without vision to renew itself (*Grund*, pp. 156-7), leaves in doubt the superman's own ability to adapt his strivings to the limitations of the actual.

*Der Tod des Empedokles* thus unleashes a host of tensions which cannot, from the foregoing interpretation, be enclosed within the contours of the largely traditional endings outlined in Hölderlin's thematic sketces. Both form and content suggest an ending similar to that which already exists in the *Erste Fassung*, where the subsidiary characters, acting as a type of chorus to set in relief the hero's plight, probe in a fragmentary fashion the open questions of the content. Hölderlin's 'Grund zum *Empedokles*' may also contain *in nuce* the ending he sought. In his outline of the thought structure he states: 'und so gehet sie wieder von da aus durch eine mäßige freiere Reflexion oder Empfindung sicher freier gründlicher (d.h. aus der Erfahrung und Erkenntnis des Heterogenen) in den Anfangston zurück' (*Grund*, p. 149). The above statement suggests a circular ending, whereby the outcome leads us back to the problems of the initial situation in spite of the protagonist's decision to die. Climactic closure by means of action, i.e., the hero's leap into the volcano, would be less appropriate than a circular structure, in that it would remove the interiorised focus of the poetic drama, just as the mass eulogy outlined in the *Frankfurter Plan* (p. 145-48) would place an artificial end to questions that remain open. Slightly more fitting is the ending sketched in the plan for the Fifth Act of the *Dritte Fassung* (p. 168) where certain patterns that ally the work with romantic closure are visible. The content is prophetic, suggesting a climactic rise of tension and significance. Moreover, if the final statement, voicing intention in the future ('Des Tags darauf will er [Manes, the Seer] ihnen [the populace] verkünden, was der letzte Wille des Empedokles war [p. 148]) is taken at face value, revelation is left incomplete, and impending enlightenment serves as a dynamic motif which impels expectations forward beyond the formal ending, another feature of what is here labelled 'climactic' closure.

At the same time, neither of the extant closure plans was carried out. We may thus conjecture that a certain incongruity between the body of the work and its proposed resolutions may underlie the drama's fragmentary state. Only one strand of significance relates Empedokles' spiritual and existential dilemma with a communal vision. His personal truth, even if it is accepted uncritically, is not applicable to society at large.

The two remaining dramas in our study of the beginnings of German Romanticism, Friedrich Schlegel's _Alarcos_ and Heinrich von Kleist's _Die Familie Schroffenstein_, employ an outwardly conventional ending structure, complete with sequel and commentary. The content, however, distinguishes their methods of closure from traditional practice.

A first reading of _Alarcos_ could conceivably prompt the reader to dismiss it as a drama of little plot and less acuity of characterisation, a far cry from the blending of Antiquity and Romanticism that the writer envisaged ('Es soll ein Trauerspiel sein, im antiken Sinne des Wortes . . . aber in romantischem Stoff und Kostüm').[27] The intrigue is indeed thin: the knight Alarcos, whose name is synonymous with honour and virtue, has broken a prior commitment to the Infanta Solisa to marry the daughter of Don Garcia, a courtier at one point presumably murdered by the King, Solisa's father. Why, indeed, the Infanta allows Alarcos time to marry and father a child before she reminds him of his broken promise remains a mystery. She enlists, however, the aid of her father, who immediately orders Alarcos to dispose of his wife and to marry Solisa. The hero has thus been neatly trapped in a conflict reminiscent of the love-honour plots of the Spanish Golden Age and of Corneille. Schlegel's drama does not, however, probe the intricate social, ethical, and religious ramifications of the honour code as does Corneille's Le Cid, or seek to arrive at a universally acceptable solution. Rather, Alarcos gallops off furiously to fulfill the demands of honour, bemoaning and dreading his plight the entire way. At this point, tension virtually disappears, and the second and final act may well be regarded as the various stages of the final situation, or the sequel to the introductory motif (the King's order) which determines the outcome. Stone by stone, the edifice of state and family crumbles, burying the protagonist in its rubble.

The power of Alarcos lies more in its depiction of total disaster than in any subtlety of intrigue or characterisation. In rapid succession, Alarcos's wife stabs herself but yet lives to deliver a thundering prophecy of woe, forecasting the death of the King and his daughter within three days. In anger and self-hatred, the hero hastens her death with a second wound, whereupon he summons his followers and, in an echo of traditional closure, disposes of his property. He is subjected to yet another doom-ridden prophecy, this time from his mother-in-law. No sooner has this ceased than, in wooden succession, news is brought of first the Infanta's sudden death and then the king's (in even less than the prescribed three days!). The kingdom now in shambles, his household destroyed, and his every ambition thwarted, Alarcos succumbs to 'die wilde Furie' (p. 261) and commits suicide.

The second act to this point has functioned as a sequel. Here, however, a partially conventional commentary is appended. A slight but unconvincing eulogy of the hero ensues, with a feeble assertion that death bespeaks release from the true death, life. The castle steward now goes on to deal with the future: Alarcos's daughter will be cared for in a convent and eventually enter orders. Whether this signifies tragic appeasement is highly unlikely; the daughter represents, rather, in her reclusive future life, the last sterile branch of a dead family. He himself, the steward determines, will devote his life to prayer and mourning. While calm and stasis thus prevail, despair is not lightened. From one point of view, the drama comes to a 'full stop' with the reduction of family and state, love and honour, to nothing. From another, the ending continues to revolve in a constricting circle of grief; hence its designation here as a combination of conventional sequel-commentary structure and of the partially circular.

The weak continuing action of _Alarcos_, circumscribed by a _memento mori_, functions in sharp contrast to the ending of even so grimly pessimistic a drama as Shakespeare's _Timon of Athens_ (c. 1607). Significantly, the curse inscribed on the protagonist's tomb is merely to be read and bypassed; the road, which leads onward from the _memento mori_ to the city, where the 'sword' reinstates the 'olive' of peace, and the 'leech' heals the wounds of discord, thus has a literal denotation and a symbolic connotation.[28]

In spite of the sequel-commentary pattern of Heinrich von Kleist's _Die Familie Schroffenstein_, this drama moves onward to a new ending structure, here found for the first time in the serious dramas of our study. It still bears, nevertheless, a certain affinity to Euripides' _Orestes_, where the flippant tone of the outcome contrasts with the grimness of the preceding scenes. More markedly than in Orestes, however, the 'ironic reversal' closure of Kleist's drama goes beyond the mere employment of a mode and, by pitting the superficial harmony of the final situation against the unending cycle of misunderstanding and disaster which has emerged as man's existential plight in the foregoing conflict, takes on the role of a structure. The undoing of closural convention by its very employment bears out the aptness of Günter Blöcker's characterisation in a general context of the innovative aspects of Kleist's dramas: 'Jedes seiner Dramen ist ein Schwellenwerk, in welchem Konventionelles bis zu dem Punkt geführt wird, wo es den Übertritt in Zukünftiges anzeigt.'[29] One modification of the above statement is, however, necessary: not only does Kleist's dramatic corpus serve as a precursor of later trends in drama, but also, with reference to closure, his practice links itself with that of other romantics, who mark the beginning of modern closural tendencies.

The root of tragedy in Die Familie Schroffenstein and in its two manuscript forms, the sketch entitled 'Die Familie Thierrez' and the draft, 'Die Familie Ghonorez,' lies in man's willingness to accept appearance as reality, as well as in the demonic forces of chance and disguise which precipitate man's fatal miscomprehensions. Directly before the introductory motif to the ending, two brothers have, reacting rashly and vengefully to a chain of misleading coincidences, slain their own eldest children. Shortly after the discovery of the bodies, a significant exchange takes place between the blind Sylvius and the Shakespearean 'wise fool' figure, Johann, both of whom are relatively detached from the action by reason of their 'handicaps.' This dialogue, coming shortly before revelation of the bizarre circumstances that have inspired deepening chaos, acts, in a sense, as the summary of the drama and the affirmation that tragedy will never resolve itself.

> Syl. Wohin führst du mich, Knabe?
> Joh. Ins Elend, Alter, denn ich bin die Torheit.
> Sei nur getrost! Es ist der rechte Weg.
> Syl. Weh! Weh! Im Wald die Blindheit, und ihr Hüter
> Der Wahnsinn! Führe heim mich, Knabe, heim!
> Joh. Ins Glück? Es geht nicht, Alter. 's ist inwendig
> Verriegelt. Komm. Wir müssen vorwärts.[30]

Metaphorically, man's existential plight in the Kleistian drama is articulated in these words. Blind in a shadowy universe, guided by our own foolishness which does not even have the intuitive wisdom of the idiot, we find the doors to fortune barred. The sole grandeur lies in our unending and stubborn journey forwards.

The true ending of the *Schroffensteiner*--a non-ending--may indeed lie in the above lines. The apparent ending of the text, when it comes, is a mockery. With the *deus ex machina*-like arrival of Ursula, reality drops its cloak of seeming and the ludicrously trivial grounds for the tragedy are revealed. Apparent reconciliation ensues in the sequel when, in a situation reminiscent of the parental reconciliation in *Romeo and Juliet*, the warring parents of the dead lovers resolve their differences. Harmony is, however, only outward, for it consists in empty gestures and even emptier words. With averted faces, the fathers of the slain lovers exchange handshakes and embraces; the suggestion nevertheless persists that, in their refusal to look at each other, they are still guilty of 'Versehen' in place of 'Sehen.'[31] The malicious, double-edged glee of the commentary shatters this pantomime of harmony. Johann calls for wine to celebrate the reconciliation and refers to the foregoing slaughter as a devilish joke played by means of masks. Alongside the references to theatrical disguises, another dramatic metaphor is employed: in an interlingual pun, Ursula, the 'alte Hexe,' is identified as the cause for both the tying and the untying of the knot of the intrigue. In short, a grotesque pseudo-witch--a far cry from the gods of the traditional deus ex machina--accomplishes what Aristotle calls the 'tying' and the 'untying' of the plot, and what is called in French the 'dénouement.' Finally, the theatre forms the subject of the ironic pointe that terminates the drama:

> Du spielst gut aus der Tasche,
> Ich bin zufrieden mit dem Kunststück. Geh.
> (I [V, i], p. 152)

Harmony is shattered by this apparently frivolous understatement. Circumstance has, in effect, pulled forth a maddening array of events to which man, with his passions and the blindness of his deductive reasoning, has reacted as predictably as the puppets of Kleist's Marionettentheater.

Theatrical allusions no longer function in the ending of Kleist's drama as do those of, for instance, Calderón's La vida es sueño, to provide a graceful exit for actors and audience from the stage of illusion to that of reality; rather, the ironic reversal inherent in the outcome of his drama leads back into the heart of grief, confusion, and mishap. Although the intrigue has been neatly terminated and exposition is complete, little appears to have been gained from enlightenment. Man remains the dupe of the universe.

The 'ironic reversal' structure may thus be described in the following way: through the use of conventional dramatic structures, the reconciliation and reinstated stability of closure are ironized, to the point that the antithesis of the surface harmony results. The outward equilibrium of the ending is undercut and revealed to be merely a persiflage. Theatrical metaphors are employed touundo the illusion created by the theatre. The drama thus ironizes its own apparatus for resolving conflict. Although, therefore, the ironic mode appears on the level of content, it so infuses the structure of the drama by pitting the ending against what comes before that its function is that of a structure.

With the 'ironic reversal' in the ending of Kleist's first published drama, the beginning of German romantic drama establishes itself as a period of radical shifts in the history of dramatic closure. A central question arises from the variance of closural structures established to this point in our study: what determines the choice of one structure over another? The answer to this query appears to lead back into the matter of ethos. At least at this early point in the evolution of romantic closure, no conscious effort seems to be made, except in the sketches of Hölderlin's Empedokles, to impose pre-existing structural norms upon the ending. Rather, content appears to determine the structure of the outcome, and content is the articulation of ethos. A dialectical thought process lies at the core of the dramatist's treatment of his material, and an over-riding awareness of the simultaneous contradictions and parallels within situation, character, setting and action is ceaselessly driven forward, to the point that tension does not fully disperse. When the drama, as in Genoveva, concerns itself with a series of states where the development of action is subordinate to a subjective expression of reactions, the collage structure emerges. A sharper, more concentrated focus on action as the result of antithetical forces within character and situation leads, as in Der Abschied, to closure on the peak of a suddenly-rising wave of action and emotion. In the continuing awareness that the play of antithetical forces does not stop, the climactic ending is indeed fragile, impeded only by the absence of further represented action from again undergoing change. The tableau structure, with its emphasis on showing in place of telling and the underlying awareness of the dynamic power of the symbol inherent in its functioning, is here combined with the climactic structure. A relatively less fluctuating outcome is reached by means of the other represented structures. Kleist's Schroffenstein drama, by means of ironic reversal, replaces seeming harmony with the prospect of the infinite repetition of similar malentendus, given the nature of both man and the universe. Analogous to this structure is the circular, combined with a series of collage clusters in Tieck's Genoveva. Resulting from the flux and reflux of antitheses and parallels, ending and beginning are linked by variations of theme, leit-motif and setting, to the extent that a movement forward in time is yet a movement backward. The second variation of the circular structure is illustrated by Alarcos, where the intrigue, marked by little action but a rapid series of consequences to a central action, slides downward to disaster and fragmentation. While such a progression would foreseeably lead to a 'full stop,' it is paradoxically suspended in a constricting cycle of despair, grief, and heavenly supplication; to paraphrase Jean Paul in his Vorschule zur Ästhetik, a lingering whimper of dissonance continues to sound.[32]

Now that the contours of the romantic sense of the ending, or rather, the sense of the non-ending, have been delineated, a slight detour can be made to the dramas of Schiller and Goethe, viewed--at least by traditional German scholarship--as classicists or idealists.

### 4. Typological parallels to romantic closure: The ending of major dramas by Schiller and Goethe

The inclusion of Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy (wr. 1796-99, perf. 1798-99, pr. 1800) and his 'romantische Tragödie,' Die Jungfrau von Orleans (wr. 1800-01, perf. and pr. 1801), and of Goethe's Faust I, a reworking and completion of the 'Ur-Faust,' published in 1808, in a study of romantic closure marks no attempt to contribute to the polemics of literary classification. Rather, it aims to determine to what extent Schiller and Goethe share common tendencies with the romantic generation, and whether a communality of aesthetic outlook will emerge in the context of closure.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's vituperative reaction to the ending of Schiller's Wallensteins Tod, the final drama of the trilogy, immediately suggests a parallel with romantic closure. Hegel focuses on the despair of the outcome: 'Wenn das Stück endigt, so ist Alles aus, das Reich des Nichts, des Todes hat den Sieg behalten; es endigt nicht als eine Theodicee.'[33] He goes on to say in even stronger terms that the consequences of Wallenstein's decision 'für das allgemeine Deutschland Frieden zu gebieten' leads to an aesthetically and philosophically unsatisfactory outcome: 'Leben gegen Leben; aber es steht nur Tod gegen Leben auf, und unglaublich! abscheulich! der Tod siegt über das Leben! Die ist nicht tragisch, sondern entsetzlich! Die zerrei t das Gemüth, daraus kann man nicht mit erleichterter Brust springen!'[34] His scandalized reaction to Schiller's ending reflects, of course, his own view of dialectics in nature, history and art, whereby infinite spirit in contrast with finite nature leads to the self-realization of spirit and hence a movement to a still-distant ideal state. In this dialectical process, based on a belief in inherent historical progress, the concept of catharsis is posited as a necessity in the dramatic ending, for it signifies a momentary 'Ruhezustand,' a point of reconciliation or synthesis.[35] That Hegel decries the lack of cathartic harmony in Schiller's Wallenstein points indirectly to a closural parallel between Schiller and the romantic generation. When the sequel-commentary structure of the ending is undone, the drama dispenses with a major means of forwarding a cathartic response. In our overview of romantic drama thus far, tensions, dissonances, and ambiguities are maintained, and action, although artificially halted by the end of the dramatic text, is frequently poised in a state of tension from which it may at any moment snap forth.

The endings of each of the component parts of the Wallenstein trilogy are characterized by a dynamic quality. In this way, the subdivisions do not form separate and autonomous stages of a dramatic cycle as do those of the Oresteia or the Theban trilogy. In the structure, content and function of their endings may be found one of the major differentiating factors between the trilogy in antiquity and in the nineteenth century.[36]

The first of the three dramas, Wallenstein's Lager, presents a shifting fresco of a lifestyle and an era, from which a vivid but chaotic panorama of life among Wallenstein's troops emerges. Finally, as if a diffused spotlight, after initially shooting at random over a vast area, suddenly contracts and focuses upon a centre, the disparate parts of the army join together in the closing chorus. The final stage in a collage of relatively unconnected dialogue and action, the choral finale may be said to constitute the ending. Although it represents a crescendo of feeling and united action, the concluding song yet prefigures the negative forces of the forthcoming narrative: the protagonist's solitude, betrayal, fate, inability to act decisively, and lonely death.[37] With the closing of the curtain, a new structural element enters our overview of the dramatic ending for the first time. The stage instructions are: 'Der Vorhang fällt, ehe der Chor ganz ausgesungen.' with this detail, an essential theatrica factor in the syntax and semantics of closure, the ending takes on a heightened climactic, forward-propelling significance.[38]

The 'precipitous curtain' is once more used in the ending of the second play which forms a sub-unit of the entity. Die Piccolomini concludes as follows: 'Indem er [i.e. Max Piccolomini] abgeht, fällt der Vorhang' (V, iii, p. 405). Tension is again climactically driven beyond the close of the represented action. The immediately preceding words afford an illustration of how syntax may function in combination with rhetoric to contribute to the tensions embodied within the structure of the ending. The final line poses a central but unresolved problem:

> Ob ich den Freund, ob ich den Vater soll entbehren.

For analysis, the clause may be rewritten as follows:

```
/  /   x     /     ||  /  /   x   /  x
Ob ich den Freund, ||  ob ich den Vater
          soll entbehren.
```

The grammatical parallelism of the compound clause, set off by the repetition of 'ob ich,' emphasizes the existence of two parallel but mutually antagonistic choices. The intensely personal nature of the choice is reflected in the repetition of 'ich' as well as in the double stress falling upon 'ob ich.' The parallel placement of 'Freund' and 'Vater' in the context of antithetical choice, along with the assonance of the 'f' sound, further reinforce the imminence of an agonizing decision. The moral dilemma is linguistically brought to a head by the displacement of 'soll' before its complementary infinitive, while the consequences of either choice are baldly articulated through 'entbehren' in a position of final prominence, further emphasized by a highly audible rhyme between 'er-klären' and 'ent-behren.' In this way, Schiller has transformed a static passage of highly formal, abstract analysis into a tensely-held climactic structure that simultaneously sweeps action forward into the next and final subdivision of the trilogy.

The outcome of Wallensteins Tod represents no surprise, for it is fully prepared for and even highlighted in the title. By the same token, the event that, in Freytag's terminology, would be called the 'reversal' leading to the catastrophe has little catastrophic value, in the popular sense of the word. Rather, Wallenstein's death, the first consequence of the introductory motif to the ending (conspiracy comes to a head), takes place in a subdued atmosphere, and happens to a strangely passive hero. The rhetorical irony of Wallenstein's final words ('Sorgt, daß sie nicht zu zeitig mich erwecken' [V, vi, p. 538]) represents, somewhat facetiously speaking, a yawn in the face of defeat and death. Schiller here debunks and reverses the convention of the fierce and dignified death of the tragic hero. Whether these words express spiritual reconciliation is highly dubious; rather, they suggest moral and physical exhaustion.[39]

Indirectly, the historian Schiller hints that even major events in the context of drama do not happen, as is traditionally represented, in statuesque isolation but, to adapt A.W. Schlegel's analogy, in the tumultuous movement of history. The actual murder of Wallenstein behind the scenes is thus--and here we diverge from established opinion--not so much a classicist convention as a result of the collage structure of the ending, whereby events overlap and coincide.[40] The succeeding motifs are similarly fragmentary, presenting lightning-glimpses of reactions to the protagonist's death alongside further political developments. The dialogue is, in large part, dynamic, marked by frequent stichomythia, ruptures, and exclamation. Clearly, no 'Ruhepunkt' signals catharsis. Seemingly, the renewed fluency of dialogue and initially calming words of Octavio Piccolomini in the twelfth scene of the final act promise stasis and regeneration; these are, however, ruptured by the sudden death by poisoning of the Gräfin and the *coup de théâtre* establishing Octavio as the behind-the-scenes manipulator who adroitly has gained power for himself. An enigmatic tableau of the newly-named prince, startled by the accidental disclosure of his title, eyes upraised (in prayer, or to avoid the eyes of others?), closes the final drama of the trilogy.

A dense combination of structures thus emerges: a collage-like shifting of scenes, a sudden return to action and surprise developments (i.e. the death of the Gräfin and the revelation of Octavio's new title) in climactic, tableau, and circular structures. In the suggestion that the chaos and 'Kabale' of history continue unmodified, although the actors have changed, circularity is apparent.

Schiller's so-called 'romantische Tragödie,' *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, is surprisingly more 'conventional' in its closural structure than the *Wallenstein* dramas. On the one hand, it marks a definitive end to the conflict of the intrigue. The heroine's triumphant death and the final tableau honouring her dead body with a shroud of military flags reflects the restored harmony within the state and the traditional eulogy of the tragic hero(ine). The tableau therefore has more affinity with traditional than with romantic usage. On the other, perplexing questions elude the apparent 'tying-up' of the ending. *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* is not only an imaginative rendering of the shepherdess's miraculous salvation, at the instigation of Heavenly voices, of her Prince and country, set against a very freely-handled historical background. Rather, it is the probing of a central enigma: Who is the Maid? What is she? Although a glorious death in battle does indeed restore her followers' faith in the heavenly inspiration of her mission, it represents for Johanna an escape from an earth-bound existence for which she is ill-suited, and from a crippling inability to combine the demands of a superior mission with those of day-to-day life and non-spiritual love. Like the albatross of Baudelaire's sonnet, she soars above human limitation in times of crisis but, once peace is established, is unable to walk. The ending embodies no final synthesis but the transcendence of worldly 'Schmerz' in the 'Freude' of death--a situation which parallels that of Tieck's Genoveva, Hölderlin's Empedokles, and Kleist's Penthesilea. The question 'What is the "Jungfrau"?' also remains open, in spite of the heroine's renewed sense of self and the renewed faith of others. The heavenly and the demonic, symbolized in the Prologue by Johanna's nightly vigils under the spirit-ridden Druid tree (Prolog 2, p. 692), are perplexingly close. We are led to wonder if the heroine's spiritual purification during her passion in the wilderness has not resulted from wishful thinking, if, as in the juxtaposition of Golo and Genoveva--the demonic and the heavenly, the pagan spirit of nature and the ostensibly heavenly--the Godly and the demonic are not different sides of the same coin. The outward harmony of the ending, in its combination of sequel and commentary with a tableau which functions largely as a commentary, thus allows ambiguities, reminiscent of the Zweifellicht of Romanticism, to escape.[41]

With the ending of the major work of so-called German Classicism or Idealism, Goethe's *Faust I* (pr. 1808), a network of unresolved problems similarly emerges, along with striking parallels to the chief structures of romantic closure. Reference has already been made in Chapter Five to the ending of the 'Ur-Faust' as an example of *Sturm und Drang* closure. Similarly, the ending of *Faust I*, it may be argued, exhibits more affinity with contemporary romantic practice than with the traditional structures of Antiquity and Neo-Classicism, or with the relatively conventional endings of Goethe's classicist drama, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (pr. 1787 in its fourth version) and Schiller's *Braut von Messina* (perf., pr. 1803), which mark opposing but simultaneous lines of development. Brief mention may also be made of the ending of *Egmont* (1788) which, before the melodrama establishes itself in the context of chiefly spoken theatre, and not chiefly that of musical recitative, employs a typically melodramatic ending: a climactic event cast in the structure of a musical tableau.[42]

Even after the completion of *Faust II* in 1831, Goethe still writes, 'Aufschlu erwarten Sie nicht; der Welt und Menschengeschichte gleich enthüllt das zuletzt aufgelöste Problem immer ein neues, aufzulösendes.'[43] These words, in effect, form in the context of closure a typological parallel to Friedrich Schlegel's view that romantic poetry 'nie vollendet sein kann.'[44] Subjectivity, Goethe states, distinguishes *Faust I* from *Faust II*: 'Es ist alles aus einem befangenen, leidenschaftlichen Individuum hervorgegangen, welches Halbdunkel den Menschen auch so wohltun mag' (III, p. 457).

On the basis of Goethe's own indications, we may conjecture that fragmentary and ambivalent elements are contained within the ending. The text furthers such a conjecture. Although the closure of Faust I incorporates major modifications to the 'Ur-Faust,' it is neither static nor resolved, and may be designated a climactic ending. The 'Prolog im Himmel,' absent in the earlier version, imparts, it is true, a type of pre-ending reminiscent of the Senecan tradition, and endows to the drama the sense of a miracle play. Just as the miraculous salvation concluding Calderón's Devoción de la cruz does not represent a coup de théâtre but a natural occurrence in a world overseen by divine mercy, so the ending of Faust I, with its salvation of Gretchen, could be viewed as the working-out of expectations established by both form and content. The way in which the protagonist's impending salvation is to be accomplished, moreover, seems to go against the grain of the romantic image of transcendence. At the conclusion of Part I, Faust is left alive, faced with the matter of earning salvation. No inversion of life and death accompanies a spiritual infusion into a monistic Weltall. The world still seems to be the centre of a triadic structure with Heaven above and Hell below.

Other factors, however, set the apparently straightforward aspects of closure in Faust I into question. The triple framework of the text, with its 'Zueignung,' 'Vorspiel auf dem Theater,' and 'Prolog im Himmel' form a magic lense through which the inner drama may be viewed from several perspectives. The first words of the elegaic 'Zueignung' suggest from the beginning that the forthcoming drama will be filled with ambiguities: 'Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten' (III, p. 9).

The work is, the poetic persona indicates, a creation of his youth. Now that Faust I has been placed in a somewhat vague atmosphere of yearning, the tone abruptly changes with the Knittelvers of the 'Vorspiel auf dem Theater.' A heated discussion is taking place between the director, the poet, and the comedian. The poet, now represented somewhat ironically as a sentimental, idealistic figure shrinking at the prospect of exposing his work to the vulgar public, is offended by the director's pragmatic theatrical concerns. The 'Lustige Person' acts, however, as a mediator. The theater, he argues, is a game that must be played with courage and vivacity. Within the many layers of the drama, there is something for everyone:

> Laßt Phantasie mit allen ihren Chören,
> Vernunft, Verstand, Empfindung, Leidenschaft,
> Doch, merkt euch wohl! nicht ohne Narrheit hören!
> ('Vorspiel,' p. 11)

As the Director suggests, if a 'piece' (i.e. drama) consists of 'pieces,' it should be allowed to emerge in an assortment of fragments (p. 11). By way of extension, the 'Lustige Person' further argues that drama is no less enigmatic and kaleidoscopic than life itself:

> Greift nur hinein ins volle Menschenleben!
> Ein jeder lebt's, nicht vielen ist's bekannt,
> Und wo ihr's packt, da ist's interessant.
> In bunten Bildern wenig Klarheit,
> Viel Irrtum und ein Fünkchen Wahrheit,
> So wird der beste Trank gebraut,
> Der alle Welt erquickt und auferbaut (ll. 167-73, p. 13).

The 'Vorspiel' thus takes on a major function which belies its light and frivolous tone. It acts essentially as a series of signals conditioning the receiver's expectations and responses; at the same time, it casts the entire drama into a shifting network of 'Scherz' and 'Ernst.' Yet another aspect of the public Erwartungshorizont is conditioned, naturally, by prior versions of the Faust legend, where the hero traces a course 'vom Himmel durch die Welt zur Hölle' (l. 242, p. 15). That Faust is traditionally condemned to Hell counterbalances the prefigured resurrection of the 'Prolog im Himmel.'

The pompous trappings of Heaven and the pre-Galilean world order it incorporates are thereby ironized; the suspicion emerges that even the dictates of God are to be taken cum grano salis. By the same token, the 'pre-ending' contained within the 'Prolog im Himmel' is caught up in the all-pervasive irony. From this point of view, the ending of Faust I may indeed be placed within our larger typology of romantic closure. The abrupt termination in full action, the sudden disintegration of Faust and Mephistopheles, and the mysterious voice calling 'Heinrich!' mark a dynamic ending fraught with surprise and perplexity, and may hence be designated 'climactic.' If, moreover, the interplay of 'Scherz' and 'Ernst' linking the framework and the outcome is viewed in the light of romantic irony, a circular linkage emerges.[45]

The closural structures and their functions in Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy and his 'romantic tragedy,' Die Jungfrau von Orleans, as well as in Goethe's Faust I--works which range in their years of first performance or publication from 1798 to 1808, and thus coincide with the first decade of German Romanticism--indicate marked parallels to what we have thus far designated 'romantic closure.' These endings, with the partial exception of Die Jungfrau, evince prominent forward-directing functions, tending to propell the drama onward to continuing conflict beyond the confines of the individual text, and backward, into the indeterminacies woven into the dramatic narrative. While Goethe's *Faust I* closes with a pronounced heightening of intensity, it simultaneously scatters the problems of action and character outward and inward, paralleling the thematic breadth of the entire drama. Closure in Schiller's trilogy has, by way of contrast, the impact of a clenched fist which terminates the action with a tightening of conflict and somewhat self-consciously drives tensions forward. In somewhat similar terms, Robert Pichl's study of Schiller and Grillparzer's closure practice refers to the former's employment of 'polar contrasts' which result in the 'äußere Zuspitzung' of the ending.[46] *Die Jungfrau*, however, reapproximates traditional closure with the heroine's autocommentary and the eulogistic function of the final tableau; at the same time, the heavenly-demonic motivation of Johanna, her inability to compromise with the exigences of life in a capacity other than that of an avenging angel of wrath, and the lack of moral fibre in the monarch and the court she has served, continue to inject dissonances into the outwardly neat closural structure. Whether this quality forms part of a larger plan or stems from the text's inability to convince the receiver is a tenuous question.[47]

The reception of Schiller and Goethe's contemporaries obliquely confirms the parallelism of their closural practice with that of the Romantics. Hegel's outrage at the absence of a cathartic ending in the *Wallenstein* trilogy has already suggested one major affinity.[48] This leads to a further conjecture: that Hegelian dialectics, based upon a progressive view of historical development, demand a closural structure typologically allied with conventional practice, while closure among a number of pre-romantic dramatists and, as further analysis will affirm, a great number of Romantics, reflects dualities joined in no harmonious or positive synthesis.

Among other contemporary assessments of closure in the work of Goethe and Schiller, A.W. Schlegel's fourteenth lecture of the series Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur (1808) comments on the fragmentary form of Faust I, a quality which, he claims, lies as much in the nature of the work as in its status as part of a still uncompleted entity: 'Es ist schwer zu sagen, ob man mehr zu der Höhe hinanstaunt . . . . oder mehr an den Tiefen schwindelt, die sich vor unsern Blicken aufthun.'[49] He goes on to refer briefly to the demands that the fragmentary form of the text places upon the receiver: 'Er fördert oft die Einbildungskraft der Leser auf, ja er nöthigt sie, seinen fleihenden Gruppen zum Hintergrunde unerme liche bewegliche Gemählde zu geben.'[50] Although the ending is not directly considered, we may assume that the imaginative completion demanded of the reader extends to the ending of the drama. Ludwig Tieck's observations in his Dramaturgische Blätter, as observed in our preceding chapter, dwell on the continuity of tension and action observable among the three parts of the Wallenstein dramas.[51] He recognizes, moreover, that Schiller does not wholly realize the potentials of the tableau, for his incorporation of the structure is self-consciously ordered. The final scene of Wallensteins Tod he criticizes, as already pointed out, for its overbearing pessimism, world-weariness, and the lingering ambiguities concerning the protagonist's greatness and strength.

## 5. After Die Familie Schroffenstein: Closure in the Dramas of Kleist

The preceding chapter, in its attempt to arrive at a theoretical delineation of the romantic view of closure, has already summarised Ludwig Tieck's assessments of Kleistian closure practice. The attitude of the post-romantic critic is not, of course, entirely reliable in the assessment of Kleist's dramatic endings. Both he and Solger have, however, affirmed the innovative aspects incorporated in the young dramatist's structures and content. Significantly, criticism has focused more on Kleist's Weltanschauung than on the non-Aristotelian aspects of his closure practice.

From the foregoing assessments of Kleist's closure by his older contemporaries, it is evident that his dramas are viewed as revolutionary and somewhat bizarre. Kleist has continued to be a problematic figure within the contexts of Romanticism and German Classicism. The recent study of Benjamin Bennett still calls him a 'Classicist,' a designation which, applied to his drama, does not fully realise the fluctuating relationships between subject and object, self and world, incorporated in his work.[52] When, however, the preconception of romantic drama as 'Erlösungs- und Gnadendrama' is rejected--a concept which our closure study, supported by the analyses of Gerhard Kluge, has thus far attempted to disperse--his adherence to the Romantic Movement appears to emerge more clearly.[53]

The structure of the Kleistian drama, like that of romantic drama in general, marks a departure from classical norms, a characteristic that Die Familie Schroffenstein has already borne out. On a more general level, E.L. Stahl notes that the position of the climax is rarely in the third act, 'but much nearer to the end, so that the climax and the catastrophe tend to coincide.' By classical standards, he goes on to comment, Kleist's dramas 'will be found deficient in the use of the dénouement and lacking in the qualities of balance and symmetry;' if these norms are, however, applied, 'the formal values' of his work will be misinterpreted.[54] Although Stahl's contention that the dramas should not be held up to prescriptive formal standards is highly sensible, and could be applied to romantic drama at large, the terms 'balance,' 'symmetry,' and 'use of the dénouement' are not clarified. He implies, however, that the intrigue rises steadily to its most extreme point of complication, only to incur a radical but unreconciled modification. The applicability of this generalisation can only be ascertained from a textual study.

Unlike Hölderlin's Empedokles, Kleist's dramatic fragment Robert Guiskard, Herzog der Normänner, begun in 1802, destroyed the following year, reconstructed and published still as a fragment in 1808, is unaccompanied by plans or extensive commentary. The author's letter to Ulrike von Kleist suggests that its satisfactory completion proved beyond his powers, a task for someone 'der noch nicht da ist.'[55] The extant fragment of ten scenes, printed in the periodical Phöbus in 1808, cannot definitively be viewed as a re-edition of the original destroyed text; nevertheless, the Stoffgeschichte and the content of the available scenes offer some indication of the possible outcome and the difficulties inherent in its incorporation.[56]

Karl W.F. von Funck's account of the history of Robert Guiskard in Schiller's Horen (1797) relates that the military adventurer, usurper of several principalities in lower Italy, was on the verge of attacking Constantinople in both 1081 and 1085 and, on the second attempt, died of the plague before the attack could begin. As an account of the futility of human endeavour in the face of a natural scourge, the historical embryo lends itself to an ironic treatment. Kleist's interpretation, however, operates within an intertextual as well as historical frame of reference. Like Oedipus Rex and his **first** comedy, Der zerbrochne Krug, Kleist's fragment opens with a mass petition. The Herzog's followers beg to return homeward -- a plea repeated in the final line of the text -- where, they are convinced, the plague infestation will not follow them. A second but nascent conflict is prefigured in the first ten scenes, a violent power-struggle around a weakened leader who, we are led to believe, is already suffering from the early symptoms of the plague. Behind his outward dominance, there lurk signs of impending disaster: his hinted usurpation of his nephew's rights, his projected intention to supersede his daughter's hereditary rights, his failing health, and his apparent refusal to give in to the demands of his followers. Whether and how the two sets of problems--the physical and the political--are interrelated remains in doubt. Conjectures on the possible outcome are thus highly tentative.

In view of Kleist's closure practice in all his dramas, as the analysis of Die Famile Schroffenstein has already indicated and the forthcoming overview will reinforce, a resolved or harmonious outcome is most unlikely. The plague, in our opinion, could be developed to adopt one of two roles, or a combination thereof. First, it could function as a deus ex machina to annihilate the Herzog's army and ambitions, pointing out the futility of political machinations and personal superbia. A collage-like series of stages, similar to those in the ending of Penthesilea, would depict the relentless disintegration of the superhuman psyche and of the power structure.[57] Robert Guiskard would then be an 'anti-Oedipus,' demonstrating that no tragic appeasement can emerge from the undifferentiated workings of fate. The second possibility could combine a circular ending with an upward movement of tension. If the soldiers' desire to flee from pestilence is to function as a dynamic motif leading to revolting factions within Guiskard's forces, the initial ten scenes could function as a prologue to civil conflict -- a suggestion reinforced by the confrontation in the sixth scene between Robert and Abälard.

With only the partial exception of Käthchen von Heilbronn, the endings of Kleist's dramas are marked by antithetical elements which come to no final harmony, breeding either fragmentation and self-destruction or a lingering echo of conflict. His two comedies, Der zerbrochne Krug (wr. 1806; perf. and pr. 1807) and Amphitryon (wr. 1806; pr. 1807) mask a grimly serious content under a comic surface, and thus demand consideration alongside his other dramas.

The central symbol in Der zerbrochne Krug, as Ilse Graham has pointed out, is the titular jug.[58] This provides the drama with both its thematic coherence and its motivation. In a sense, the work is, like Oedipus Rex, a 'who-done-it' detective play, and the jug serves as evidence and victim. Significantly, a jug, once shattered, cannot undergo a Humpty-Dumpty-like restitution; similarly, the action comes to no static point of harmony. On the jug, moreover, is depicted a coronation ceremony, encircled by pictures of vassals and, in the background, scenes from the Brussels marketplace (vii, pp. 200-201), symbols of a bygone age of order and security.[59] Now in fragments, the picture reflects the current disordered state of society, where the upholder of justice is actually the culprit, where the actors move through a shadowy network of falsehoods, where justice itself is a financial transaction, and where the two major characters in the 'fallen' society are named 'Adam' and 'Eve.'

Upon the drama's first performance in the Weimar Theatre (July 31, 1807), directed by Goethe, the audience response, first affable, turned to insults. Not only Goethe's imposition of a three-act structure but also the actors' declamatory style, which lengthened the final act to an hour, may have been responsible for the failure. A subsequent review advised the young writer 'die entdeckte Wahrheit nicht so unendlich weit vom endlichen Bekenntnis [zu] entfernen.'[60] Unfair as it is, this comment focuses upon two important aspects: Kleist's formal innovations, particularly with reference to closure, and the lengthy, seemingly full explication that characterises the ending. After the climax, which doubles its function as the introductory motif to the ending--the discovery of the judge as perpetrator of the 'crime,' and his ensuing flight--the action gradually resolves itself. In a parody of Oedipus Rex, 'Creon' (Walter) handles the affairs of the 'children,' Eve and Ruprecht, and, upon exposure of the forged military order, a conventional happy ending results. The sequel does not, however, fall into immobility. Unrest persists and, in spite of the outwardly complete explication, ambiguities prevail. The attempted connivance, for instance, between Walter and Adam before the latter's discovery and flight, marked by endeavours to exchange whispered instructions and to end the session quickly (xi, p. 239; xi, pp. 240, 241), tend to undo the impression of outward justice. Eve's revelation, moreover, has suspicious overtones. Her previous lies, particularly to Frau Brigitte, and her somewhat hyperbolic virtuous indignation at the magistrate's 'shameful propositions' (xii, p. 243) ring false. Puns perpetuate a parallel between the breaking of the jug and the 'maiden's' incipient or actual loss of chastity: 'Sieh, hätt ein Pferd bei dir den Krug zertrümmert,/Ich wär so eifersüchtig just, als jetzt!' (xii, p. 243). Intentional or not, such hints sow lingering suspicions in their very creation of levels of duplicity in the diction, and thereby the structure of the text.

No sooner has the conventional comic ending developed, sealed by the marriage plans and kisses of the lovers, than the action shifts to the fleeing magistrate, a banished Oedipus, racing 'Berg auf, Berg ab.' The reminder of Oedipus's banishment brings to mind another parallel: if the Greek hero is, in a sense, a scapegoat singled out to purge the community of divinely-inflicted evils, is Adam also, in part, a victim whose graft and amorous intrigues are both shared and condoned by the social system he represents? In the context of Walter's former eagerness to hush the evidence against his inferior, the former's words in the guise of righteous commentary cannot be taken seriously. His concern that Adam should suffer no self-inflicted harm, his merely interim appointment of Licht, his assertion that, if the accounts have not been falsified, the former official will not be sent away, and his 'Fort! . . . holt ihn wieder!' suggest that the demotion is only temporary. By means of the self-conscious use of language, whereby a constant gap is maintained between surface and implied meaning, an ironic reversal once more emerges, as in Die Familie Schroffenstein. The final scene, where Frau Marthe, in her obsessive concern with the restitution of the jug, determines to take her case to Utrecht, merely reinforces the conviction that the drama, having reached no definitive ending, is due to begin once more. To continue, moreover, Graham's metaphorical reading, the final reminder of the broken remnants of the jug reinvokes the image of a fragmented order and a society obsessed with material concerns.

The alternate ending of the comedy, composed for its first publication in 1811, is an expanded version of the twelfth scene and serves chiefly to lengthen the exposition, as well as to create a stronger parallel between the club-footed Adam and Satan. The words of Walter concerning Adam's future reinstatement are, however, less ambiguous here, and once more point critically at the mockery of justice suggested throughout the drama.

So wird er wohl auf irgendeinem Platze
Noch zu erhalten sein. Fort, holt ihn wieder.[61]

More complex, more dependent on verbal undertones, the ironic reversal structure in Der zerbrochne Krug reveals an advance from that of Die Familie Schroffenstein, which effects a more or less direct opposition between seeming and reality. Yet another twist of this structure characterises the ending of Amphitryon, where three final situations are set up: the one, reconciled and triumphant, the second, marked by an exchange of taunts and insults, and the third, bordering on tragedy. Their nature is illustrated by their three respective final utterances: Amphitryon's 'Dank dir!,' Sosias's 'Mein Lebtag sah ich noch solch einen Teufelskerl, mit Prügeln, nicht,' and Alkmene's 'Ach!'(I, III, ii, pp. 319-320). To Amphitryon, now that his chief concern, that of the possessive male who has feared his wife's infidelity, has been lifted, the revelation of Zeus's identity and the promise of a demi-god heir are satisfactory. Alkmene, however, remains a largely silent partner throughout the chorus of adulation greeting the revelation of the god's identity and the announcement of her pregnancy. The deus ex machina resolution evokes an ambiguous outcry from her: 'Schützt mich, ihr Himmlischen!' she exclaims as she swoons into her husband's arms. Her salvation has announced itself; whether her words are merely due to amazement or an earnest plea for protection is ambiguous. Upon hearing that she is pregnant, she again expresses dismay rather than joy with her renewed unconsciousness. At this point, as if to recast the divine elements of Zeus's revelation and spectacular disappearance into a relativistic light, the exalted mood is abruptly shattered by the taunts of Merkur and Sosias. While Merkur represents himself as 'ich . . ./ Der Fußgeflügelte der Götter,' (I, III, ii, p. 320), to Sosias he is a 'Teufelskerl.' Indirectly, the suggestion arises that Alkmene has also been the victim of a simultaneously godly and devilish ruse. The tone once more reverts to amazed adulation in a series of stichomytheic exclamations, abruptly shattered by Alkmene's 'Ach!' Her cryptic exclamation once more swings the function and structure of the ending from that of climactic joy to either dismay or grief. More eloquent than a carefully-phrased commentary, her 'Ach!' presents an unsolved riddle, open to the interpretation of the director, actor, and receiver. Significantly, Kleist, liberal with stage directions throughout the scene, gives no indication of her facial expressions or gestures at this point.

Marianne Thalmann's study of selected romantic comedies notes that Alkmene's final utterance is an echo of the end of the fourth scene of Act I, where it expresses regret at Jupiter/Amphitryon's imminent departure.[62] Her next words, it may be added, are equally important: 'Er ist berauscht. Ich bin es auch' (I, iv, p. 262). Alkmene is, at the end of the drama, a traveller whose journey has turned a full circle, only to arrive at its point of departure. She arrives, however, permanently estranged, to find the familiar Amphitryon unchanged, but herself metamorphised beyond return. Her plight is one familiar to romantic poetry. Like the crazed seer of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' who has fed on honey-dew and 'drunk the milk of Paradise,' or like Empedokles, whose ascent to god-like experience leaves him insatiable, she is possessed of a higher knowledge. Concurrently, she has been set into darkness by the foregoing illumination ('soll mir/ Dein Licht die Seele ewig mich umnächten,' III, ii, p. 318), for, finding herself the victim of a ruse, she can no longer be 'berauscht.' Knowledge has dispersed the enchantment of the mysterious.

The three final situations of Amphitryon in conjunction thus produce a climactic structure, marked by exclamations and the maintenance of tensions and antagonisms. Alkmene's 'Ach!' lies, moreover, in ironic opposition to her husband's reaction, and serves, in its position of final prominence, to undo reconciliation by means of ironic reversal.

From Penthesilea (wr. 1807, pr. 1808) onward, Kleist's endings become increasingly dynamic, tending to rely less on word plays and, by means of an increasing focus on metaphor, gesture and spectacle, to incorporate more strongly visual elements. That this change indicates a view to possible staging is, however, dubious. The letter of late fall, 1807 to Marie von Kleist maintains that Penthesilea will not be acceptable on the stage 'bei den Forderungen, die das Publikum an die Bühne macht . . . so lang die Kräfte unser Schauspiel auf nichts geübt, als Naturen, wie die Kotzebueschen und Ifflandschen sind, nachzuahmen' (IV, p. 796). The decadence of the stage, he claims, springs from the demands made by the female element of the audience on 'Sittlichkeit und Moral.'

Penthesilea, Kleist affirms to Marie, expresses all the 'Schmutz zugleich und Glanz meiner Seele' (IV, p. 797). Not only do these words express his close involvement with the drama, but also they represent the deep divisions within its heroine and, by extension, within the ending. The nature of Penthesilea's character, position and predicted fate place her in a dilemma which precludes positive resolution. Unlike

Kleist's preceding and subsequent dramas, the polarities of the heroine's situation are not couched in shadow or darkness, but etched in symbols of blazing colour and light. Character, plot and intrigue vibrate with strident intensity. Even in form, the drama offers no respite from conflict by means of division into acts. The twenty-four scenes follow each other swiftly, and only the fourteenth and fifteenth scenes, if their initial and final portions are disregarded, offer some relative repose in the love-idyll of Achilles and Penthesilea. Dynamic ferocity propells all images referring to the heroine, as when Odysseus describes her as a 'Sturmwind' blowing the 'zerrissenes Gewölk' in battle (I, i, p. 324). The ending, however, both bears out and reverses this early metaphor. While Penthesilea has indeed reduced Achilles to torn-asunder fragments, moving on him like a stormwind, her own psyche has also been torn to shreds by the 'Sturmwind' of warring passion and commitment.

The substance of the ending of Penthesilea comes as little surprise; unwittingly, the heroine pronounces her own impending doom upon her first appearance in the drama: 'Verflucht das Herz, daß sich nicht mäßgen kann' (I, v, p. 345). What distinguishes the ending is the violent manner in which it comes about and the inner drama expressed through the words, silences, and actions of the protagonist. In a structure typical of Kleist and, indeed, of a great number of romantic dramas, climax and introductory motif of the final situation coincide. Like Schiller in Wallensteins Tod, the culminating action which determines the ending is not represented directly on the stage. Here, however, the resemblance ends. Schiller's representation is primarily objective, relying on sound, motion, and the immediate consequences of the action. Kleist, however, presents the slaughter of Achilles through a narrative from a shocked onlooker, interrupted by the equally shocked responses of the listeners. Walter Müller-Seidel astutely comments, 'Die List enthüllt nicht wie bei Schiller eine Fragwürdigkeit des Handelns im Mittel der Intrige. . ...Nicht auf eine Problematik des Handelns sieht man sich verwiesen, sondern auf eine bestimmte Umwelt und auf die Art, wie sie die Wahrheit des Gefühls beeinträchtigt.'[63] This observation leads him to inquire whether one can even refer to an 'intrigue' in Penthesilea, a question that could equally well be posed of Alarcos, Genoveva, Faust I, and a great number of romantic dramas. The essential element in Penthesilea consists in the heroine's emotions and their expression in action; in this way, the ending represents the final stages of a psycho-drama once all hope of arriving at a balance of antagonistic forces has disappeared.

The final words of the narrator's account usher in the initial trance-like silence of the heroine in the ending:

> Jetzt steht sie lautlos da, die Grauenvolle,
> Bei seiner Leich, umschnüffelt von der Meute,
> Und blicket starr, als wärs ein leeres Blatt,
> Den Bogen siegreich auf der Schulter tragend,
> In das Unendliche hinaus, und schweigt.
> (xxiii, p. 414)

Like in the opening four scenes of the drama, she is initially viewed from the eyes of others. Her gestures, however, join with her silence to create a terrifying pantomime of madness. Her first words are an eruption of Dionysiac self-delusion: 'Bin ich in Elysium?'(xxiv, p. 420). Her initial dream-state is immediately shattered by dawning awareness. At this point, the dialogue reflects in its disjointedness the onset of a new movement in the collage of pantomime, thematic variations, and moods.

Penth.: So, so--
Oberpr.: Du trafst ihn--
Penth.: Ich zerriß ihn

Proth.: O meine Königin!
Penth.: Oder war es anders?
Meroe: Die Gräßliche!
Penth.: Küßt ich ihn tot?
1. Priest. O Himmel!

The climax of the heroine's awareness of the truth of her actions is marked by a staccato series of questions:

Nicht? Küßt ich nicht? Zerissen wirklich? sprecht?
(xxiv, p. 425)

As suddenly as comprehension has dawned, the tone shifts from stunned shock to ironic objectivity and a grimly comic play on words:

So war es ein Versehen. Küsse, Bisse,
Das reimt sich, und wer recht von Herzen liebt,
Kann schon das eine für das andre greifen.

These words now mark yet another transition as, in swift but broken dialogue, the heroine transmits a rapid series of orders, terminated by the symbolic handing-over of her sacred quiver. With her imminent suicide, her words take on a new outward fluency. This is, however, undermined by the discordantly jarring diction of her final words (e.g. 'grabe, kalt wie Erz. . .Hart wie Stahl. . . der Reue durch und durch'). In their guttural ferocity, her words vibrate with self-hatred and destruction, and fall abruptly to a litotic 'Nun ists gut' (xxiv, p. 427).

The ending of Penthesilea exemplifies, in effect, a mini-drama enclosed in a framework of choral commentary. Upon the heroine's death, teichoscopy again ensues (xxiv, p. 428), but gives way almost immediately to an outwardly conventional structure--the commentary. An immense distance, however, separates this commentary from traditional usage, for it in no way attempts to remove the contradictions inherent in Penthesilea's nature. Rather, it transforms them into a highly physical, tangible metaphor. The Queen's fate, Prothoe summarises, has been that of the Übermensch. Like a mighty oak with spreading branches, her very might has made her victim of the storm. In this final image of climactic motion, intensity and destruction, the conflicts of the drama are held and transfixed. From a series of contrastive collage-stages rising in speed and action, the commentary, in a shift from its traditional harmonising function, represents a permanent state of tension.

Of Kleist's succeeding dramas, the ending of Käthchen von Heilbronn (wr. 1808; pr. [fragment] 1808; perf. 1810) marks a somewhat self-conscious movement toward popular stage conventions, a factor which, along with its positive outcome, may have contributed to its successful staging in Vienna, the sole theatrical triumph of Kleist's lifetime.[64] Spectacular tableaux, almost of the variety ridiculed in Tieck's Der gestiefelte Kater and Die verkehrte Welt, join with the unveiling of a surprise development (the marriage of Käthchen and the Graf vom Strahl). Exclamatory dialogue, the vituperative curses of the villainess Kunigunde, and a final procession form an ending simultaneously illustrative of the climactic and tableau structures. Whether Die Hermannsschlacht (wr. 1809; pr. 1821) can be dealt with as a romantic drama at all, or merely as a piece of shrill nationalist propaganda which grows into a 'Hohelied des Hasses' is debatable.[65] The dramatic form, in its expanse, parallels that of much romantic drama, and the final patriotic call to continue the attack against the occupying Romans on Germanic soil represents a climactic structure. The significance of various hints that the apparent ethos of the drama is not to be taken at face value nevertheless continues to be overlooked.[66] Thusnelda's flat reply, 'Das ist geschehen. Laß sein' (II, V, xxiii, p. 625), to her husband's praise of her savagery against Ventidius, puzzling gestures, as when, presented with an enemy's sword, Hermann directly rids himself of it, and the implication of the aside between Marbod and Wolf (II, V, xxiv, p. 628) suggest an undercurrent of criticism or irony. That an ironic and dualistic vision, moreover, should have vanished from Kleist's work is at this point difficult to comprehend.

From the viewpoint of structure and function, the ending of Prinz Friedrich von Homburg (wr. 1811; pr. and perf. 1821) is possibly the most complex of Kleist's entire dramatic oeuvre. A fluid, ambiguous relationship between dream and reality infuses the drama. To view the work as does Benjamin Bennett, who claims in a recent study that 'constant reference to its proper mode of realization as a theatrical performance' and 'work[ing] out the theory of drama implied by it' causes its obscurity to disappear, contradicts its very nature. To claim, moreover, that the Emperor's 'true motives and intentions' are clear, and that the framework can be reduced to 'a few symbolic touches like the Garden of Eden image at the beginning' imposes limitations on the aesthetic plurivocality of the drama which, in our view, neither content nor structure can uphold. In one aspect, however, Bennett's analysis appears apt, in its admission that 'the play does truly come full circle and lead us back to the original garden.'[68]

The circular structure of Prinz Friedrich is accomplished by its dream framework. The opening scene is at night outside the castle of Fehrbellin. The Prince, exhausted from battle with the Swedes, where he has distinguished himself militarily, is asleep on a bench. In the final scene we learn that this is situated underneath a splintered oak, an ambiguous image which, on the one hand, may suggest death, and on the other, the partially fused and partially divided consciousness of dream and reality at the heart of the drama. On a literal level, the situation is unexceptional, reflecting the romantics' recurrent preoccupation with dreams, somnambulism, and what later came to be known as 'depth psychology.'[69] On a symbolic level, the implications of this setting are much greater. The Prince, like Sigismondo in Calderón's La vida es sueño (1635), constructs a dream-world which verge on nightmare; unlike that of the Spanish Baroque drama, however, the outcome accomplishes no neat clarification of the contours of dream and life. Kleist confronts us with one of the most prevalent themes of the Baroque, that youth, glory, love and life itself are dream-states that vanish in the light of experience. The initial setting, like the final, can still not be reduced merely to a 'theatre within a theatre,' whereby the drama, in performance, creates a series of dramatic situations, one encased within the other. The separation is not as neat as that of prologue, main text, and epilogue in Genoveva, or the making and breaking of illusion in Der gestiefelte Kater. Past, present and future, spectator and actor, dream and life are so intertwined that one segment is finally indistinguishable from the other. Even the solidity of objects as an anchor of reality is removed: in the simultaneous vision and blindness of both dream and waking, they serve only, like Natalie's glove, to throw the consciousness into greater confusion. For the prince, moreover, no defences exist in his solitary dream-state against the machinations of the so-called 'rational' forces of the outside world. The representatives of order, the Kurfürst and Hohenstollern, actually propagate disorder in their rationalist testing of the somnambulist's responses. From this perspective, the words of the Kurfürst are prophetic of one major aspect of the ending:

> Ins Nichts mit dir zurück, Herr Prinz von Homburg,
> Ins Nichts, ins Nichts! In dem Gefild der Schlacht,
> Sehn wir, wenns dir gefällig ist, uns wieder!
> (II, I, ii, p. 634)

The question emerges whether the forthcoming battle and its aftermath in the dream sequence do not pose an awareness of the 'Nichts' at the heart of human action and dreams of glory.

Both beginning and ending fuse themselves, devoid of clear lines of demarcation, into the body of the drama. The silence succeeding the closing of the door in Scene One gives way to the silent pantomime of the second scene, while the third marks an abrupt shift in action, poising the 'inner drama' upon the ambiguity of the foregoing scene. In a typological reflection of the structure of Tieck's Genoveva, Kleist's ending simultaneously reflects and reverses the stages of the beginning. The tension, light, and furious action of the tenth scene of the final act suddenly give way to darkness and silence. This renewed 'Nachtseite' does not, however, in view of the discordant ending of the 'play within a play,' indicate a return to calm. The Prince, it must be recalled, is absent when the Kurfürst announces his repeal of the death sentence. The hero's last words have been, 'Mit der Welt schloß ich die Rechnung ab!' (II, V, ix, p. 706). Like Penthesilea, Prinz Friedrich appears ripe for death. To the accompaniment of a death-march, his first words in the renewed darkness imply a reversal of life and death, light and darkness, reminiscent of Novalis's Hymnen an die Nacht. Eternity, he says, is achieved through death; darkness provides the light of a thousand suns; when the wings of the new vision bear one outward through space, like a vessel propelled by winds, the harbour of the 'real' world sinks from view in the gathering twilight; vision begins at the moment that all 'seeing' of colours and forms gives way to mist (II, V, x, p. 707).

Slowly, however, the outer framework shifts nearer to tangible objects. At this point, we learn that the oak of the initial setting is splintered. In a parodic parallel to the scientific queries of the Kurfürst concerning the origin of the flowers in the Prince's wreath, the protagonist inquires the names of the garden flowers, a reference which may, in its context, suggest a funeral bier.

The final scene completes the inverted journey outward to the immediacies of love, social order, ambition, and battle. One is left uncertain, however, to what degree the actions of the Kurfürst and Natalie are 'real,' and to what degree they may be a patchwork of outer reality and dream. Once more, as in his previous manipulations, the Kurfürst is the puppeteer who controls the Prince's responses: 'Laß den Kanonendonner ihn erwecken!' (II,[V, ii] p. 708). This apparent call to action remains, however, poised upon ambiguity. If the events of the 'inner plot' have been a dream-fantasy, the drama has indeed swung about to its point of departure. One detail nevertheless stands out, in spite of its fragmentary articulation: the protagonist, in the ensuing silence after the outburst of cannons, does not 'seize the day.' His question, 'Nein, sagt! Ist es ein Traum?' and its rejoinder, 'Ein Traum, was sonst?' cast the apparent renewal of life and action in an ironic light. Prinz Friedrich remains, the ending implies, isolated in the reversal of vision accomplished by his pseudo-death. If light is, as he has discovered, present only in its physical absence, has the same reversal transpired in his view of dream and waking? In short, does he now view the call to battle ('Ins Feld! . . . Zur Schlacht! . . . Zum Sieg!' [V, ii, p. 709]) as a pageantry, a renewed manipulation by the Kurfürst-Puppeteer?

A great complexity of structure and function thus results from the outcome of Prinz Friedrich von Homburg. With more focus than Tieck in the ending of Genoveva, Kleist inverts the situations of the opening framework in a collage structure. From the slow, subdued diction and pace of the tenth scene of the final act, and the muffled sounds of a death-march, the collage clusters gather momentum to end climactically with a call to battle, whereby the drama closes with a crescendo of noise and action. Simultaneously, a circular linkage is formed with the commencement of the drama, which also hovers on the verge of a forthcoming battle.

## 6. Contemporaries of Kleist: Werner, Körner, Arnim, Brentano, and Fouqué

To turn to the dramas of Zacharias Werner, Theodor Körner, Achim von Arnim, Clemens Brentano and Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué becomes an exercise in obscurity. The creators of immense, loosely-knit dramas which surpass even Tieck's Genoveva in length, and incorporate what Roger Paulin refers to as 'der uneinheitliche Stil und die unhistorische Kombinationsfreudigkeit' of the romantic drama,[70] they tend to overwhelm the modern reader. Hence their works have become material for passing commentary in general histories of German Romanticism, whatever their contemporary impact may have been.

Our study of the Frühromantiker and of Heinrich von Kleist has already suggested a major preoccupation with the distant historical past. With only the exception of Körner's Tony (1812), not one of the dramas to be considered in the present subdivision has a contemporary setting. The function of history is, however, not that of a physical and psychological transposition into another era; rather, it reflects the form of the romantic drama and the ethos emerging from it. Friedrich Sengle describes the role of historical content as follows: 'das zeitlich und national Ferne . . . wird gesucht und gesehen als Wurzel der Nahen, nicht als abenteuerliche exotische Welt.'[71] The often chaotic juxtaposition of past and present, as Sengle summarises it, may in part parallel the dramatic forms evolved by the Romantics: 'Das romantische Geschichtsbild ist einer Stadt zu vergleichen, die Bauwerke aus allen Jahrhunderten enthält und eben doch gerade dies Stadt ist, in einem Blick zu überschauen, in einen Raum hineingefügt. Die unendlich differenzierte, spannungsreiche Einheit und Gegenwart dieses Raumes ist dem Romantiker wichtiger als die Entstehung des einzelnen Bauwerks zu einer bestimmten Zeit, vielleicht in Revolution, in Widerspruch zu vorhergehende Stufe.'[72] For the very reason that, from the viewpoint of plot as well as of historical content, the drama creates no single 'edifice,' problems are inherent in the isolation and identification of an ending. Tieck's Genoveva and Schlegel's Alarcos have already posed a problem of this type; this is further extended in works such as Fouqué's immense trilogy, Der Held des Nordens (wr. 1808-1810; pr. 1810) and Brentano's Die Gründung Prags (1815). Referring to the latter work, Horst Steinmetz comments: 'Eigenart der Romantiker ist es, Einzelbildern assoziierend nachzuspüren und sie in mehr oder minder langen Versketten ausklingen zu lassen.' The result, he points out, is a multilinear treatment which does not form a cohesive dramatic intrigue.[73]

One member of the today well-nigh forgotten generation of later Romantics, Zacharias Werner, could well be called the 'German Victor Hugo' of dramatic closure. The endings of Zacharias Werner's dramas are dynamic and flamboyant. In one of the few and mostly early twentieth-century overviews of his work, Gretel Carow remarks: 'Um die wirksame Gestaltung des Stück-Schlusses hat sich Werner sehr bemüht.' As an example, she cites the ending of Die Söhne des Thals (Part One), with its massive exodus of the Templars from Cyprus. Her brief discussion emphasises Werner's increasing mastery of imposing endings in his later work--no grounds, however, are supplied for this value judgement-- and points out, almost as an afterthought, that 'Der opernartige Schluß des 'Luther' correspondiert mit der Introduktionsscene.'[74] The reference to opera and the vague formulation of a parallel between beginning and ending raise more questions than they solve. Whether she refers to the presence of a large circle of onlookers in the ending, as in the third, and not the initial scene of the first act, or to the presence of the miners of the opening scene among the onlookers of the final one, is not clear.

Werner's career as a dramatist was, as Otto Mann maintains, atypical of the Romantics, for its brief duration may be attributed to his entry into the Roman Catholic priesthood in 1810 and not to a paucity of dramatic talent.[75] From the beginning, his knowledge of the theatre and his aim at the creation of spectacular theatrical effects filters into his work. This self-conscious planning of coups de théâtre raises the question how much of his focus on the ending stems from a romantic ethos, and how much from a view to the stage. The answer may lie midway between the two possibilities. The evolving structures and functions of romantic closure, devoid of their more subtle elements of word play and multiplicity of connotation, provided ideal material for spectacular and sensational staging, as even Werner's earliest drama will illustrate.

Die Templer auf Cypern (pr. 1803, perf. 1807), the first part of the two-part drama entitled Die Söhne des Thals, is a collage of scenes depicting the decadence and disintegration of a demoralized order of crusader monks. Werner himself refers to the work as 'nur ein Aggregat dramatischer Bilder, nicht ein System von Handlungen.'[76] The work does little more than carry out the process prefigured in the Prologue:

> Der Orden ist dem Tode schon geweiht;
> Nicht seiner Feinde Zahl ist sein Verderben.
> Er muß an seinem eig'nen Unwerth sterben.[77]

From this perspective, the outcome is, as in the Senecan and renaissance drama, clearly announced and reinforced throughout the work. The chief difference lies, however, in the proliferation of relatively autonomous episodes, and in the structure and content of the ending.

Although the 'Schicksalsgift'gen Dolch,' whose true name is chance, ostensibly represents the motivation of the work, the unfocused use of the term, as in Alarcos, imparts additional ambiguity to the ending. The work has been called a 'Schicksalstragödie;' in our view, too many factors depend on human weakness and corruption for the term to have any meaning in this context.[78] Fate, as in Penthesilea, is as much an internal failing as an outwardly-determined development.

Somewhat wilfully, Werner makes use of a six-act structure which merely draws out the chain of grisly events and incredible coincidents.

Only the skilful use of dialogue, spectacle, and Gothic horror elements--all amply laced with religious moralizing- rescue the drama from imparting an impression of amorphous disjointedness. Its structure marks a major break from tradition: here, for the first time in the course of our overview, we encounter a drama where climax and ending coincide. Previous outcomes, such as that of *Käthchen von Heilbronn*, have indeed already been designated 'climactic' by virtue of their exclamatory nature and maintenance of action or conflict. Here, however, we find a drama where the final event--the departure of the Templars from Cyprus--serves as the culmination, the goal toward which the majority of the episodes lead. The ending is thus not a consequence of a yet more major development, but the point toward which the strands of action scattered throughout the drama are more or less directed.

The outcome is not, however, characterised by the convergence of multiple plots noted in the Baroque drama in our preceding overview. Rather, as the first of a two-part chronicle, it prepares the ground for forthcoming developments some seven years later. In the sixth and final act, peripheral intrigues continue to be added, figures tread in and out of the foreground, and two relatively separate events simultaneously build upward to a grand and spectacular climax which also serves as a point of departure and a prediction of the ending of the second part. From a haphazard insertion, we are suddenly shifted to the first major component of the ending: the flight of Robert to Scotland, with instructions included in a mysterious letter delivered by the resident 'mad prophetess,'to render himself in Paris eight years hence, where he will rescue the red cross of the Templars from the flames. In nuce, we are thus presented with a preview of the ending of the second part. Robert disappears from the scene, and only the sails of his boat are later seen in the distance while the second major development of the ending takes place. For an extended portion of the text, the action continues to wind slowly and circuitously toward the most spectacular development of the drama. Already at the end of the second scene, the dialogue suddenly gathers impetus:

> Molay: In Gottes Namen!--Laß't das Panner wehn,
> Die Glocken tönen--grüßt mit Sang und Spiele
> Den letzten Tag auf Cypern--fort zum Ziele!--
> (II, VI, ii, p. 246)

The stage now floods with colour, sound, and a teeming crowd. The scattered commentary of the assembled spectators gives way to the first of several immense tableaux. In great detail, Werner's stage directions describe the monks' procession to the harbour. At this point, a major development of the tableau as a closural structure is evident. In this work of a Romantic who, unlike his more 'literary' counterparts, is also a popular stage dramatist, the ending is a giant spectacle where one tableau succeeds another. The overwhelming combination of song, mass movement, costume, colour and pantomime reveals, on the one hand, an elaboration over the tableau structures of the later eighteenth-century drama, and, on the other, the propensity of the Romantics for melodramatic spectacle. In Werner's treatment of the ending to Die Templer, the German romantic drama has fused with a major closural structure of the sub-literary form which, preponderantly in France and England, is to be called the 'melodrama.'[79]

Werner's ending is designed to astound and bedazzle the spectator. Staccato cries bring the chatter of the assembled crowd to an abrupt halt, and a song, to the accompaniment of bells, is heard approaching from off-stage. With great precision Werner describes the arrangement and gestures of the members of the procession, whose members finally form a series of concentric half-circles with the abbott in the centre. The tableau is broken by the farewell blessings of Molay and the bearer of the holy banner, echoed by the responses of the spectators. Dialogue is once more interrupted by yet another tableau, this time more focused and agitated: the mad prophetess stands poised before the crowd, bearing a blazing cross, hair streaming. Her initial silence gives way to screams of prophecy and vengeance, tending to shatter the atmosphere of glorified harmony in the preceding tableau. After some moments of silent shock, however, the tableau of mass movement continues, broken only by brief exclamations and renewed peals of bells and trumpets. Finally, just as the sound of approaching music has announed the arrival of the procession, so the music gradually fades away with the departing ships.

The chief structural differences between this elaborate ending and its historical predecessors outside the Romantic movement lie in its panoramic, strongly visual, musical, and dynamic nature. It may thus be identified as both a climactic and a tableau ending. Conflict has, moreover, merely reached a temporary stage of submersion, a factor clearly indicated by the proliferation of prophecy and foreboding.

The ending to Die Templer auf Cypern is thus a spectacular outburst of colour, sound and movement, calculated to feed the tastes of an audience or reading public hungry for sensation. At the same time, it serves as more than a tangible incorporation of a popular Erwartungs-horizont. Aesthetic valuation lies outside our present concerns; the structure and function of the outcome yet stems from an ethos similar to those incorporated by other romantic dramas examined thus far. The represented action of the dramatic narrative is viewed as a fluidly-shifting succession of stages, which form not only a forward-moving line, but a circuitous, twisting trajectory marked by tributaries and even the superposition of intrigues. At the same time, Werner's highly obvious ending 'tricks,' aimed at startling the receiver, have already moved to the level of spectacle. The popular theatre, represented by the sentimental-didactic intrigues of dramatists such as Kotzebue and Iffland, and the exotic adventures of the Ritterdrama, with borrowings from the Gothic mode, has converged with the dynamic incompletion of the romantic ending. From Werner onward, a new movement is foreseeable. As Kleist's Käthchen von Heilbronn und Die Herrmannsschlacht have already hinted, closure will become increasingly a set of formalised motifs, to the point that a certain predictability of structure and function will emerge.

The fixing of visual, active and suspenseful elements in what amounts to a new norm of closure is in part confirmed by Werner's later dramatic practice. Of Das Kreuz an der Ostsee (wr. 1805-06; pr. 1806), Sengle comments with some amusement: 'Die welt- und dämonenüberwindende Kraft der entsagenden heiligen Liebe wird an einem geschichtlichen Stoff dargetan, der dem Innern des Dichters eigentlich nur insofern entspricht, als mit ihm die Welt für einen Märtyrer-Erlöser-Liebestod gegeben ist!'[80]

The drama consists of two loosely-combined main intrigues: the conflict of the heathen Prussians against the Christian Poles and their Germanic allies; and the love story of Warmio and Malgona. Expositor-narrator and overseer of the action is the drama's 'guardian saint,' Adalbert, disguised as a minstrel (*Spielmann*). He has one eccentric trait: flames spurt forth from his head whenever the name of Christ is mentioned. His words and fireworks have a directive function and force the evolution of the outcome.

To speak of an ending in a far-flung, loosely-connected set of adventures is, as in *Die Templer*, merely to speak of the closing narrative sequence. The two lovers have miraculously met on an island. Seemingly alone, they are tempted to consummate their bridal night. The woman, however, argues that 'Wohllust' or physical passion constitutes spiritual death. The saint-*Spielmann* thunderously echoes her words: 'Der Tod! Der Tod!' (III [4], III, iii, p. 177). Repeatedly reminded that 'the idle pleasures of the flesh' must be rejected, the lovers finally address each other as brother and sister. The newly-achieved state of harmony is, however, abruptly ruptured by the arrival of the heathens, announced by their battle-cries. About to seize his weapons, Marmio is averted: 'Bleib rein vom Bruderblute!' (III [4], III, iii, p. 182). His followers thus meet a martyr's death, and the lovers are dragged forth from the stage in chains, their fate left undetermined but their martyrdom a likelihood; hence, perhaps, Sengle's reference to a 'Liebestod' ending. The colourful Wernerian tableau now forms: against a blazing sky, to the tones of a harp, the Spielmann steps forth from his role and, in a Calderónian sequel, warns the spectators that art and faith are intertwined.[81] The climactic-tableau structure has thus started to give way again to the sequel-commentary pattern.

To extend closural analysis to Werner's other dramas such as Wanda, Königin der Sarmaten (perf. 1808) and Attila, König der Hunnen (perf. 1809) would entail repetitiveness. Werner has come upon an effective recipe of closure and perpetuates it. Only Attila, among his later dramas, forsakes the musical and 'blazing sky' trappings of his previous work to end climactically and suspensefully with terse dialogue. Werner's least typical drama, Der vierundzwanzigste Februar, will be examined later among other Schicksalstragödien.

A Bombenschluß or big bang ending is also found in the popular dramas of Theodor Körner, who enjoyed modest success as a dramatist in Vienna. His earliest serious drama, Tony (1812), set in 1803, is based upon Kleist's novella 'Die Verlobung in St. Domingo' (1811). With reference to this drama, a bloodthirsty tale which imposes a positive ending upon the original version, Tieck has little good to say in his Kritische Schriften. His comments are of interest from two perspectives. First, in his contention that novellistic plots cannot be transformed into dramatic ones without incurring a 'Grenzkrieg,' he offers an interesting extension to his often-quoted statements regarding the structure of the novella as a genre.[82] The latter is, he argues, dependent upon 'das Anknüpfen der Hauptbegebenheit' (KS III, p. 94) on the immediacies of time, place, circumstance, and character; unlike the novella, every drama, however, has a unique form, where time and place cannot be confined to the limitations demanded in the novella. This first aspect ties in with the second. Körner's drama, he maintains, transforms the ambiguous ending of Kleist's work into a fortunate rescue of uninteresting characters.(KS III, p. 94). In yet another expression of the romantic 'poetics of closure,' Tieck implies that, for a drama to achieve and hold interest, it must be more than an intrigue with a neatly resolved ending.

The outcome of *Tony* is, as the criticism of Tieck suggests, far removed from the structures and functions we have thus far identified among the Romantics. It has, rather, overtones of Kotzebue's 'happy ending' to *Menschenhaß und Reue*, complete with a moralistic commentary. In this respect, the Schicksalstragödie *Die Sühne*, to be examined below, and *Zriny* (wr. 1812; prod. 1814) are far more representative. The latter closes climactically, in a great upswing of nationalist fervour, along with a reversal of life and death in a predicted *Liebestod*. In swift, clipped phrases the battlechief Zriny, to the sound of trumpets, bids farewell to his wife and troops and, in a united cry of 'Dir nach! Dir nach! Für Gott und Vaterland!'[83] the warriors thunder off the stage. The ninth and final scene, however, marks a major development over even the tableau-practice of Werner: completely devoid of dialogue, it is a massive tableau of action combined with sound, and represents the second stage of the outcome. From a theatrical perspective, this ending marks the development of a tendency to its utmost lengths, and, with its substitution of 'showing' for 'telling, and use of a precipitous curtain, is worthy of quotation:

> Das Theater verwandelt sich in einen Teil des brennenden alten Schlosses. . . .Trompetengeschmetter, Trommelwirbeln und Feldgeschrei der wütend anstürmenden Türken . . . . Verzweifelnder Kampf. Eva erscheint mit der Fackel am Pulverturm auf der Mauer. Juranitsch stürzt zuerst. Zriny tritt über den Leichnam und kämpft mächtig fort. Endlich stürzt auch er. Eva schleudert zugleich die Fackel in den Pulverturm; ein fürchterlicher Knall; das neue Schloß stürzt zusammen, und der Vorhang fällt schnell.
> (V, viii, p. 144)

In moving from Werner and Körner, successful popular dramatists, to Achim von Arnim, Clemens Brentano and Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, we are confronted with the immense diversity of German romantic drama. From the spectacular drama of action, we are once more replaced into the lyrical and ecstatic Krisengespräche of the Lesedrama.

The name of Freiherr Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué is today almost exclusively connected with his novella Undine (1811). That he was one of the most read German Romantics is now virtually inconceivable. Heinrich Heine, in his inimitably deflatory style, emphasises Fouqué's contemporary renown: 'Er ist ein wahrer Dichter und die Weihe der Poesie ruht auf seinem Haupte . . . [er] kann sich ruhmen, daß er der einzige von der romantischen Schule ist, an dessen Schriften auch die niederen Klassen Geschmack gefunden.' The dramas he dismisses, after an initial eulogy, as 'bunte Oberflächlichkeit.' Sigurd, the hero of the Nibelungen trilogy, has, he concludes, 'so viel Mut wie hundert Löwen und so viel Verstand wie zwei Esel.'[84] To borrow an analogy from modern Trivialliteratur, the implication emerges that the Nibelungen hero is a glorified Obelix, and Fouqué's drama, a serious Asterix.

Arno Schmidt's admirably detailed study of Fouqué's life and numerous literary and social associations reveals that this romantic epigone was indeed a prolific dramatist.[85] Under the name of 'Pellegrin,' his first collection of dramas appeared in 1804 and 1805. Schmidt describes these as 'belangloser, tapetenbunter Inhalt, überzierliche Ritter und Frauenautomaten, italienisch motivierte Wunder- und Geistererscheinungen dazwischen.'[86] He thereby suggests that the dramatic ending in Fouqué's works is not the result of ongoing conflict, impelled by an introductory motif to a final situation, but merely the last episode in a loosely-linked series. This indeed applies to the three dramas of the Nibelungen cycle, Sigurd der Schlangentöter, Sigurds Rache, and Aslauga, all of which were completed in 1808. The beginning of Sigurd, der Schlangentöter already, by means of dire prophecies, foreshadows the ending. The motivation is, however, split. While fate predetermines the downfall of the hero, and bestows on him a certain passivity, it also stems from within his own nature. He is in fact guilty of breaking his oath of fidelity to Brynhildur, in spite of the predetermination of fate and the effects of a love potion drunk in Gudruna's presence, and is forced to suffer the consequences. This ambivalence between fate and self-determination forces the hero to be 'schuldlos schuldig,' as H.A. Korff describes.[87] The constant articulation of the fore-knowledge of fate, however, allows no intrigue to develop, but transforms the drama into a set of static stages or situations. Fittingly, Fouqué has dispensed with act structure and divided the work into a set of six 'Abenteure,' which, in their relatively autonomous nature, have the status of chapters in a serialised novel.

One factor in particular, detracts from the potential climactic force. The dialogue, with its intricacy of Stabreim and virtuoso-like verse forms, does not reflect tension or emotion. The final dialogue between Brynhildur and Sigurd at the end of the fifth 'adventure' brings this feature to light. Still bound to Sigurd by love and fate, Brynhildur is nevertheless bent on vengeance, which she plans to combine with a Liebestod. Her dilemma, that of a romantic protagonist with mutually exclusive emotions, voices itself in inappropriately logical terms:

> Sigurds Weib
> Kann ich doch nimmer werden, eben auch
> Nicht andern Mannes Weib. So büß ich denn
> Schuldlosen Irrtum mit freiwill'gem Tod.[88]
> (sinkt zurück)

Diction and rhythm fit neither the emotional content nor the gesture of her swooning. When, moreoever, Sigurd's murderer treads into the room to find wife and husband asleep, the inanity of his words verges on the comic:

> Ho, ho!
> Bin wohl schon in des Schlangentöters Zimmern?
> Da schläft ein Mann, hat in des Weibes Schoß
> Sein Haupt gelegt. -- Das Weib ist meine Schwester. --
> (II, p. 105)

Tableaux, gestures, and swift, impassioned dialogue are absent; Fouqué's ending flounders in a superabundance of words and chevilles inserted to fit the intricate verse forms. These observations bring us to a central set of problems: to what extent does the appearance of spontaneity shape the ending? How much of the abrupt, swift, problematic, and frequently climactic force of the ending is actually a result of content and ethos, and how much is actually due to verbal devices, which transform the dialogue into a crescendo of words and action? In Fouqué's Sigurd the content of the serious romantic drama, including sinister fate, irreparably divided emotions, supernatural phenomena, dream visions, and infinite desires which find no realisation in life, are incorporated. In spite of the raw materials, the drama is a jingle of intricate poetic tours de force. This development may, on the one hand, result from an essentially non-dramatic talent; on the other, it may constitute one of the problems of the Lesedrama that increasingly, removed from the physical stage, it also isolates itself from the mental stage.[89]

The ending of the second drama of the Nibelungen trilogy, Sigurds Rache, perpetuates the equivocal nature of fate in the first. With the totality of the devastation depicted in the outcome, one is again led to question the concept of romantic drama as 'Gnade- und Erlösungsdrama.' Aslauga, the third component drama of Der Held des Nordens, signals in its outcome the regeneration and growth of a new branch of the family, established by Sigurd's daughter. The final scene is that of a tableau, followed by a closing song of praise and joy. As Steinmetz comments, however, this part of the trilogy, a positive sequel attached to the disintegrating worlds of the first and second dramas, does not temper or reconcile past devastation. Fouqué's attempted rerouting of the cycle of disaster--absent in the original epic--may imply, Steinmetz conjectures, a return to the forms of the ancient trilogy.[90]

Achim von Arnim is yet another dramatist whose works are still-born. The grounds for their non-performance are not difficult to recognise, for many bizarre elements exist in his dramatic experiments. If Tieck's prominent comedy represents a 'verkehrte Welt,' the Schaubühne of Arnim, with its peculiar genres such as 'Eine Geschichte in vier Handlungen,' 'Ein Nachspiel,' 'Ein Schattenspiel,' 'Ein Pickelheringsspiel,' 'Ein heroisches Lustspiel,' and 'ein Trauerspiel in zwei Lustspielen' surely represents a 'verwirrte Welt.' Eichendorff nevertheless defends Arnim's dramas from accusations of 'formlessness:' 'Dieser Vorwurf angeblicher Formlosigkeit scheint uns nicht den Dichter. . . zu treffen. . . . Arnim ist ein durchaus objektiver Dichter, in der Welt aber geht es nicht um ein Haar ordentlicher zu als in seinen Dichtungen, auch die äußere Welt ist nur ein Kaleidoskop, wo sich das Licht bei jeder Wendung neu und anders bricht.'[91]

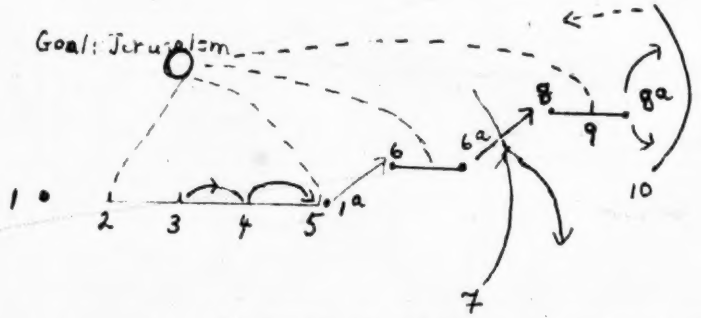
In his treatment of closure, Arnim's view is indeed kaleidoscopic. Not only do his dramas tend to trail away in a series of almost unconnected scenes, but also, no overall tendencies in the structure, content, and function of closure may be traced through his works. His lively awareness of the absurd and the contradictory exceeds even that of his romantic contemporaries and places him beyond his time; simultaneously, his work harks back to the Baroque era, and, in Halle, the first part of Halle und Jerusalem (1805-1810; pr. 1811), to that of Andreas Gryphius. Arnim's adaptation of Cardenio und Celinde (1657; re-ed. 1698; ed. and prod. by Tieck in 1817), however, takes great liberties with the original, to the extent of combining it with the legend of Ahasverus and re-setting the drama in the contours of the riotous student life of a university town. Paulin points out the one-sidedness of the Baroque impact: it is, he writes, given a concrete and contemporary frame of reference, combining Christian concerns and criticism of a historical period in the framework of a romantic 'Großdrama.'[92]

In spite of a recurrent thematic linkage, which imparts a Christian-didactic tone to the work, the scenic structure and the grouping together of a multitude of figures drives the collage organisation of the entire drama to possibly its most extreme lengths in German Romanticism. *Halle* dispenses with the causal-temporal cohesiveness of a linear narrative. Rather, the effect is that of a kaleidoscope in which the pieces, originally strewn helter-skelter, slowly reshape themselves into a only partially recognisable pattern. In the ethos of the drama, the partial harmony of the ending implies a reawakening of the individual spirit to Christian striving; simultaneously, by means of 'die transformierende Kraft des Glaubens,' a national 'Volksbewußtsein' is prefigured.[93]

A reversal of the 'verkehrte Welt' of the beginning of the drama thus leads in *Halle* to a new vision of spiritual regeneration. Paradoxically, this reversal is implied rather than accomplished, and the 'ending,' or the dawn of spiritual awareness, denotes merely the beginning of a new quest. This reawakening is also fraught with rejection. The quest, or pilgrimage after salvation, is to take place outside the context of the 'here and now,' i.e., the world of the Hallenser. Rather, it is the exclusive undertaking of a select group who, having become aware of the futility and misdirection of their being and of their age, undertake a journey to the Holy Sepulchre. Whether this contradictory nature of the outcome stems from an inability of the text to convince the reader, or from an inherently antithetical ethos, forms part of the equivocal being of the work.

Structurally, the evolution of the ending coincides with a thematic development. The thwarted amorous passions of Cardenio and Celinde graduate into a desire for vengeance, thus denoting their deepest descent into spiritual degradation. At this point, the sense of the absurd world theatre, and of the vain striving of the inflated ego to rival God, comes clear to Cardenio.[94] Along with this begins the awareness that the roots of social and spiritual unity are in the past, 'die beßre Zeit, von der sich gar nichts sagen läßt' (V[3], p. 187).

A series of scattered, parallel or contrastive scenes consitutes the 'ending:'



1--1a: 'Constant' is Ahasver.
2. Celinde/Ahasver: decides on pilgrimage.
3. Cardenio: " "
4. Convergence of Olimpie and Lysander. Confrontation, averted murder modifies (3) and leads to (5).
5. Cardenio forms death wish--prefigures ending.
6. Dispersal of group leads to new constant--6--6a. As consequence of 1--1a, Olimpie and Lysander decide to join pilgrimage.
7. Comic-grotesque rupturing of serious content: crowd rushes in, departs.
8--8a: next constant; Olimpie and Lysander act as catalyst to
9. Viren is persuaded to join pilgrimage.
10. Outer frame: partial shattering of serious content: student song hinges on 'Sehnsucht' after wandering.

In the schematic representation, only the two 'constants' give some form of continuity: first, Ahasver's role as spiritual mediator and catalyst for the series of decisions, and later, Olimpie and Lysander, the ideal counterparts of the two tormented lovers. The collage structure, achieved by the separate arrivals, soul-searching, and decisions of first Celinde, then Cardenio, then Olimpie and Lysander (their arrival together symbolises their harmonious, Godly nature), is basically static, apart from the averted confrontation between the rejected lover (Cardenio) and the successful one, Lysander. In a paratactic sequence, each new arrival comes to the resolution, but for different reasons, to undertake the pilgrimage. Only with Cardenio (5) is the decision modified and reaffirmed. The departure of Ahasver breaks this sequence, and the group disperses. In a brief sequel, Olimpie and Lysander determine to join their friends in the journey. At this point, a sudden influx of action, the grotesquely comic pursuit of a crowd after Cardenio for a past misdemeanor, ruptures the static sequence as well as the serious tone of the dialogue. We now return to the second constant, the happy lovers, who bring about the decision of Olimpie's brother Viren, himself a tormented suitor of Celinde, to embark on the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Again the thematic continuity is partially ruptured and the spatial contours suddenly widen with the 'frame' to the ending: the song of students rowing on the river. Although the closing lyric resumes the theme of wandering, it is now recast into the secular context of the student milieu, and, in place of elevated Christian concepts, the words of the lyric replace the idea of holy pilgrimage with that of yearning after faraway places.

The ending of Halle represents possibly the most elaborate collage structure thus far in our closural study. In an outcome which ostensibly is to lead toward spiritual and interpersonal harmony, a sense of chaos yet prevails. This wilful interspersal of fragments in a helter-skelter formation is further proliferated in the sequel, Jerusalem. The pilgrims, in a series of scenes shifting from the serious to the bizarre, meet either martyrdom or, as with Olimpie, a life of ascetic seclusion. A gigantic tableau forms, representing three lighted crosses above the graves of the three martyrs, and the names of the Trinity emblazoned in the sky. The solemn notes of a religious choir accompany the stage picture. The tableau is, however, also broken, along with fictional illusion. In a parallel to Baroque closure, the drama ends with an address to the 'spectator.' Suddenly, the poet treads forth in the work of his own creation and shifts the focus from illusion to reality, the transcendent to the actual, from the word to action, and from'Ernst' to 'Spiel:'

> Der Dichter: Schaffen zeigt sich im Verwandeln,
> Ernst verwandelt sich in Spiel,
> Dieses ist der Worte Ziel,
> Doch des Lebens Ziel ist Handeln.
> (V[8], p. 400)

While the collage structure and the transcendent emphasis of the above endings persist in some of Arnim's dramas from the Schaubühne of 1813, major inconsistencies emerge. The drama Der Auerhahn, which swivels between macabre episodes and buffoonery, concludes in a relatively conventional manner. With the mutual slaying of father and son, a

Schroffenstein-like instance of mistaken identity, a sequel and commentary at least overtly reinstate the 'Gerechtigkeit [des] ... neuen Stammes Wurzel' (IV[6], p. 20). The Biedermeier-like ending of renunciation and reconciliation remarked by Sengle in Der echte und der falsche Waldemar is parallelled by that of Die Vertreibung der Spanier aus Wesel im Jahre 1629, where, in an outcome reflective of bourgois ideals of stability, the simple-minded but devout Peter, a modest 'folk hero,' accepts the mayoralty of a village.[95] By the way of contrast, the ending of the pseudo-'Trauerspiel,' Jemand und Niemand, accomplishes an ironic reversal. 'Niemand' has, by virtue of his timely arrival, been chosen at random to replace the dead monarch, whose funeral procession has just departed. The resolution is, in effect, a mockery of the conventional ending of tragedies with royal protagonists: 'Der Sceptre ist in Niemands Hand, beglücktes Volk, das Niemand will regieren, laßt die Trommeten schallen, ruft den Frieden aus ....' (IV[7], p. 138). In Die Gleichen (1819), Arnim appended a reconciliatory ending, to the protests of Jacob Grimm, to the original legend.[96] The outcome of Die Appelmänner (pr. 1813) is particularly bizarre, for after the resurrection of Vivigenius from death by execution -- an episode which, in its overlapping of dream and reality, recalls Prinz Friedrich von Homburg -- a curious scene depicts the marital squabbles of an innkeeper and his wife, and their final consumption of a St. Martin's Day roast goose. Whether any significance emerges from the observation that geese are also beheaded before being cooked is a matter of conjecture!

When the dramatic experiments of Brentano are compared to those of Arnim, another instance of the extreme divergences within German romantic dramas is set into relief. In the serious genre, Brentano's achievments are less than substantial. His Aloys und Imelde, completed in 1812 but discovered and published only in 1912, marks a feeble attempt to superimpose a reconciliatory ending upon an intrigue of blood and thunder liberally sprinkled with exclamation points. The closing image of the commentary, however, that of a drop of love being lost in a giant sea, demonstrates miraculous power, but also seems to lead back obliquely to the final statement of the Cavalier: 'o versöhnet euch bei diesem Blut, das euer Haß vergoß!'[97]

The later Die Gründung Prags (1815) consists of a succession of monologues and Stimmungsbilder, rendered complex by a vast assortment of tributary actions which impart, as Horst Steinmetz observes, a static effect to the development of theme and action.[98] Brentano, in his preface to the drama, emphasises the play of contrasts or antithetical forces it incorporates. It is, he writes, 'ein romantisches Drama in gereimten jambischen Silbenmaße,' in which 'die weißen himmlischen und schwarzen irdischen Dämonen ... entgegengesetzt [sind]' (IV, p. 534). This statement suggests that, from the dramatist's point of view, tensions persist without achieving equilibrium. Within the text, the flowing-together of action in five long acts without scenic subdivision aims, it may be conjectured, at an effect of epic continuity. Within the acts frequent shifts and breaks are indicated by silent pauses, gestures, and metric variations. From these indications, an 'ending' may be isolated from the chain of episodes. In the fifth and final act, news arrives that a townsite, Prague, has been chosen. This motif serves, in effect, an introductory function. The structure of the concluding couplet of the introductory motif, with its swift rhythm, parallel placement of caesuras, and clipped juxtaposition of a question and a response build up expectation to a climactic height:

> Wir grüßten, fragten: Meister und Geselle,
> Was zimmert ihr? Sie sprachen: Prag, die Schwelle!
> (IV, V, p. 840)

The ending, marked by prophecy and jubilation, is set off from the preceding motif by 'Eine Stille.' Visual focus is drawn to Libussa, who stands in imposing silence before beginning an inspired monologue. This oration serves as both the culmination of Die Gründung Prags and the continuing link with the remaining two parts of the trilogy that Brentano envisioned but never wrote. The prophecy itself rises to its most ecstatic heights in the parallel exclamations of the final two verses:

> Es bricht die Nacht, o Duft, o Lichtes Helle!
> Prag, Prag, du unsers Heils und Glaubens Schwelle!
> (IV, V, p. 842)

As a structural unit, moreover, the ending is set off by the repetition of 'Schwelle,' (i.e., the German equivalent of the Czech 'Prague'), which not only serves as the final word of the introductory motif, but is also repeated at the end of each stanza of the prophecy, and later echoed in the two concluding verses of the drama.

The intricately and skilfully structured climactic ending reveals, by means of a second break in dialogue and abrupt transition from prophecy to the immediacy of action, the romantic propensity, carried over from the Baroque movement, for sudden shifts and reversals. Overcome by the force of her words, Libussa sinks into the arms of her sisters. This brief pause inspires a call to action from Primislaus: 'Ich pflüg den Raum der neuen Stadt euch ab.' Once again, however, the tone shifts to jubilation, as the speaker's final words are echoed by 'Alles Volk' in a paean of praise: 'Prag, Prag! du unsers Heils und Glaubens Schwelle!' (IV, V, p. 842).

From the foregoing study of closure in the serious dramas of two popular stage writers, Werner and Körner, and the Lesedramen of Fouqué, Arnim and Brentano, several developments have emerged. On the contemporary stage, the dramatic ending has achieved a new prominence. Romantic themes and motifs have blended with stage spectacle; dramatists' directions have become more elaborate and precise. In both staged and unstaged works, the ending has increasingly revealed the hallmarks of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk,' where words, music, visual elements, and gesture combine. While the cohesiveness of plot and intrigue have been undermined by the proliferation of subsidiary action, and by collage structuring which has rendered the isolation of a dominant, causally-temporally related line of action virtually impossible, verbal, pictorial and musical devices have succeeded in creating a predominance of 'climactic' elements in the ending.

Negative tendencies have nevertheless emerged. The 'big bang' effects of the climactic ending are highly obvious and prone to stylised perpetuation, as in the dramas of Zacharias Werner. The religious zeal of both Werner and Arnim force a partial revival of the commentary as a didactic structure. As noted above, the principles of folk nationalism forwarded by Arnim signal a conservative, authoritarian tendency. An increasing preoccupation with verse form, moreover, especially in the dramas of Fouqué, has tended to undermine the dramatic potential of romantic rhetoric as a spontaneous expression of feeling. With regard to Arnim, the suspicion may also arise that the heaping-together of bizarre incidents and the entanglement of action in indistinct sequences may imply, at least in part, a self-conscious game with structure.

## 7. The 'Schicksalsdrama:' A Romantic Form?

From its beginnings with works such as Tieck's Genoveva, German romantic drama has tended to exceed the length limitations conventionally imposed by the stage, a problem which, along with that of the creation of episodic, relatively unfocused plots, has served to bar many works from performance. With the 'Schicksalsdrama,' themes and motifs common to Romanticism are injected into a far more restrictive form, with ritualised conventions. An endeavour, instigated by Goethe, to prune down the 'maßlose Ausdehnung' of Werner's earlier work, and 'ihm insbesondere die mystischen Schrullen aus dem Kopfe zu treiben,'[99] resulted in the one-act drama, Der vierundzwanzigste Februar (wr. 1808, perf. 1810, pr. 1815).

The 'Schicksalsdrama' may be regarded as a 'Kleinform' of the drama, both in length and literary status. As Roger Bauer confirms in his incisive overview of the genre, it is essentially a phenomenon of

'Trivialliteratur:' 'Sans doute les tragédies que l'on est convenu d'appeler fatalistes ne se situent qu'aux "enfers du romantisme" et ne constituent qu'une des manifestations les moins glorieuses de ce mouvement littéraire.'[100] From a typological viewpoint, the 'melodrama' and the 'Schicksalsdrama' evoke similar value judgements inherent in the very definition of the genres. Jakob Minor's outline of the characteristic traits of the Germanic form reflects this devaluative tendency:

> Die Ahnung der höheren Weltordnung, welche das Drama nach Schiller gewähren sollte, verlor sich in ein schwächliches und banges Gruseln, welches die Schicksalstragödie erregte. Man zeichnete dem Schicksal, welches keiner Winkelzüge bedarf, den Umweg durch tausend Zufälligkeiten vor; man machte es abhängig von Zeit und Ort; man knüpfte sein Wirken an ein zufälliges Objekt, einen Talisman, an welchen der Fluch gebunden ist; ein raffinierter Kriminalapparat . . . wurde aufgeboten; von den Romantikern machte man sich die glanzvolle Ausbildung aller Mittel der Stimmungspoesie zu Nutze--und so entstand jenes leblose, gespenstische Drama, welches von 1815 bis etwa 1825 die deutsche Bühnen beherrschte. . . .[101]

The subgenre is an example of the increasing tendency, from the eighteenth century onward, to distinguish between 'literary' and 'subliterary' works. Concurrently, the dismissive attitude evinced by Minor from the viewpoint of aesthetic merit does not preclude consideration of the fatalistic drama in an overview of closure in serious drama. The stipulation of Bauer is here relevant: 'leur succès [i.e., that of 'Schicksalsdramen'] n'en a pas moins une signification profonde et qui est sans commune mesure avec leur valeur proprement littéraire.'[102]

The 'signification profonde' of the tragedy of fate lies in the manner in which popular taste seized upon certain aspects of the Romantic Movement.

The so-called Age of Reason had, of course, engendered a vast number of works dealing with the supernatural. The Gothic mode, with its spectres, crumbling castles, and shameful secrets handed on for generations, and fear in the face of the inexplicable and exceptional, had, with Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, and their imitators, already populated the literary marketplace with horror literature. In the drama, forerunners of the Schicksalstragödie may already be found in Tieck's Abschied (1795) and Karl von Berneck (1796), along with Schiller's Braut von Messina (wr. 1802, perf. and pr. 1803). Here already , singly or in combination, the motifs of the popular form are present: the concept of a hereditory curse, the sinister workings of nature, and the singling-out of certain inanimate objects such as a knife or sword as the instruments of destruction. In particular, the equivocal aspect of fate, whereby it is both a force beyond and external to the control of man, and an impulse. Stemming from his own character and determining the action of his will, emerges. Furthermore, the prose writings of the Romantics (e.g. Tieck's Der blonde Eckbert [1796], Brentano's Romanzen vom Rosenkranz [1810?] and Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und schönen Annerl [1817], E.T.A. Hoffmann's Die Elixiere des Teufels [1815-16] deal with concept of fate similar to that of the Schicksalstragödie. Ironically, both in the German states and abroad, specimens of what Stokoe refers to as 'depraved literature' captured the popular imagination, and the mystery and terror which are elements of the romantic Weltanschauung are 'grossly added for effect, for a crude piquancy of flavour.'[103]

upon the central element of their designation: the concept of fate. Reference has already been made to the curious two-pronged understanding of fate among the Romantics; as Schelling writes in Von der Tragödie (1802-03), 'Daß ein Schuldloser durch Schickung unvermeidlich fortan schuldig werde, ist, wie gesagt, an sich das höchste denkbare Unglück. Aber daß dieser schuldlose Schuldige freiwillig die Strafe übernimmt, dieß ist das Erhabene in der Tragödie, dadurch erklärt sich die Freiheit zur höchsten Identität mit der Nothwendigkeit.'[104] Whether the concept of 'tragedy' is in itself a misnomer among the Romantics, and whether Schelling's delineations may indeed apply to romantic practice are considerations outside the purposes of this study; what is relevant to a closural analysis is the concept of 'guiltless guilt.' In the romantic understanding of fate, its origins are no longer external or divine but simultaneously centred within the individual and in forces surrounding him. In Werner's Der 24. Februar, for instance, the family curse that predestines a succession of grisly events is self-inflicted: Kunz Kunruth's father, 'es war ein grämlich Man,' instigates the violent outburst of his son through his own actions. By this token, for just or unjust reasons, the father-son confrontation has led to the imposition of a malediction: 'Fluch dir. . . und deiner Frau,/ Und eurer Leibesfrucht.'[105] Other manifestations of fate are, however, situated outside the victims. Fate is also a mood that infuses not only man's vision of the external world, but a sinister disorder in nature that acts upon the tormented mind of the fate-stricken protagonist(s).

Again Werner's one-act drama serves as an example. The actions of nature are not explicable on purely rational grounds: that an owl should repeatedly stare through the mountain hut window, and that the well-known mountain paths should, even in a storm, breed hallucination, suggest a certain animate working of fate within nature. Similarly, while banal causes underlie the movement of inanimate objects, such as the fatal knife's falling from its hook, the timing of these actions is uncanny.

The role of fate is therefore expanded in two directions in the Schicksalstragödie. On the one hand, it has become all-pervasive, a dire determinism that has sealed off all possibility of escape. On the other, it is now a trapping, bound in with a variety of motifs, so as to create a mood or Stimmung. These factors in conjunction have a profound influence on closure.

On the formal level of intrigue, that the ending should 'close' the drama, in the sense that all possibility of further action has been removed with the manifestation of the curse, is predictable. On an evocative level, the atmosphere of fatality, guilt, and fear cannot as easily be dispersed. If fate is infused in all surrounding phenomena, and removes the individual's freedom of choice from within, but is not viewed in the context of divine infliction, it remains a mysterious and demonic force. No explanation underlies its undifferentiated workings. The closing dialogue of Müllner's Die Schuld (wr. 1812, perf. 1813) provides possibly the only convincing commentary:

Otto. Gott! Warum--warum ist denn
So entsetzliches geschehen?

Herta. (groß und ruhig)
Fragst du nach der Ursach', wenn
Sterne auf und untergehen?
Was geschieht, ist hier nur klar;
Das Warum wird offenbar,
Wenn die Toten auferstehen! (SD, p. 456)

Here, however, closural practice contradicts the expectations engendered by the foregoing content. Uncanny, sinister events are stoically accepted. The workings of fate are, as Herta expresses it, beyond human comprehension. The commentary thus marks an attempt to reinstate the calm of passive acceptance. Concurrently, it does not entirely cancel out the shocked and baffled question posed by Otto; it serves, rather, to repeat his query more objectively, and to deny the possibility of a definitive answer.

The writers of Schicksalsdramen do indeed attempt to weld together a set of situations which lead to no final harmony with the outward reconciliation of a final commentary. Werner's 24. Februar, for example, appends a moralistic about-face to a precipitous series of bloody developments. Kunz decides suddenly to render himself to justice:

Wohlan--in Gottes Namen!--
Ich büße gern das, was ich schwer verdient!--
Ich geh zum Blutgericht und geb' die Mordthat an!--
Wenn ich durch's Henkerbeil bin abgethan,
Dann mag Gott richten--ihm ist alles offenbar!
Das war ein vierundzwanzigster Februar!--
Ein Tag ist's!--Gottes Gnad' ist ewig! Amen!-- (SD, p. 291)

This attempt to cloak the outcome in a persiflage of faith and remorse nevertheless carries on the explosive rhetoric and swift developments of the sequel. Rapidly a series of revelations, which have served only to astound and crush the parent-murdererers, have ensued. Stage directions reinforce the atmosphere of shock: '*Kurt fährt entsetzt zurück . . . . Er sinkt Truden in den Arm . . . . Er wirft das Messer mit solcher Gewalt an den Boden, daß es zerspringt!*' (*SD*, p. 290). Exclamations lapse into astonished silence: 'Ich bin's--da les-t--!--! --!' Confrontation arises and immediately is forgotten in the thrust of surprises: 'Bring um's Leben / Mich auch, du Kindermörder du--!--' Even the mutual forgiveness of father and son and the implied forgiveness of God and the dead Kunruth transpire in a series of swift exclamations. By the same token, Kunz's determination to seek out justice follows abruptly upon Trude's statement, 'Er stirbt!--' (*SD*, p. 291). In diction, moreover, the closing speech of Kunz is full of rugged, rough-hewn rhythms, and the accumulation of jarring and guttural sound effects reinforces the suggestion of violence and self-destruction. In the added reminder that all is clear only to God, the pseudo-commentary brings no new certainty of knowledge. The preceding events remain a baffling disaster. The statement 'Gottes Gnad' ist ewig!' is therefore less than convincing.

Other tensions remain couched within the ending of the drama. Trude, a half-hearted accomplice to the murder, has earlier urged her husband to steal from a neighbour. She, however, reveals no repentance. The concept of social justice inherent in Kunz's final decision is matched by the social exploitation which has brought about the financial ruin of the family--although this may again be in part the effect of the curse. Finally, the network of accidents and sinister forces in nature have coincided so malevolently, and their effects have been so vast that they cannot be merely lifted. On the basis of these factors, the ending of Werner's drama may, in spite of the definitive close of action and use of a sequel-commentary structure, be viewed as 'climactic.'

Among the host of imitators inspired by *Der 24. Februar*, Theodor Körner gains a mediocre place by virtue of *Die Sühne*, which causes the atrocities of Werner's work to pale in comparison. The ending of this drama, completed in 1812, is that of raw sensation: both the eleventh and the final scenes conclude with murders, along with a maladroit attempt to inject a *Liebestod* motif, and stage directions calling for the blare of approaching horns, in what could be viewed as the precursor of the screeching sirens that announce the arrival of the police rescue team in the modern television melodrama!

Yet another imitator whose theatrical renown exceeded even that of Werner is Adam Müllner, whose drama *Der neunundzwanzigste Februar* (wr. and perf. 1812, pr. 1815) gives an additional complication to the fate motif by making it concur with a leap-year. The initial version of 1812, performed in Müllner's amateur theatre, involves a father's murder of his eleven-year-old son. Startling revelations have at this point already been made: that the budding delinquent son is actually the product of a brother-sister union, and that the family blood is thus tainted. With unchildlike sagacity Emil implores his father to stab him:

> Soll Emil, der wilde, immer
> Größer werden, immer schlimmer?-- (*SD*, p. 343)

While in the first version, the father obliges and is in the sequel assailed by the obloquy of his wife, followed by a brief moral commentary, the later version, entitled Der Wahn (1818) removes, at the protest of the theatre director in Vienna, the motif of child murder and incest and replaces these with sudden proof that the parents are not, in spite of previous evidence, siblings. The revision was, however, not effected without Müllner's complaints, for in theory he opposed reconciliatory endings.[106] His most popular drama, Die Schuld (1813) employs, as noted above, a somewhat subdued ending which nevertheless confirms the incomprehensible nature of the workings of fate. His later dramas, such as Die Albaneserin (1820), attempt to explain 'Schicksal' through madness, and impose, as Sengle remarks, 'das immer noch obligate Mitleid' aimed at awakening tragic pity.[107]

With the Freiherr E. von Houwald the genre of the tragedy of fate has, in less than a decade, exhausted itself and become fully epigonal. The fertile imagination of Houwald churned forth a series of fatalistic dramas, including Das Bild, Die Heimkehr, Fluch und Segen, and, possibly the best-known work, Der Leuchtturm (1819; pr. 1821). As Minor summarises, 'Eine abgeschmackte, gotteslästerliche Moral beschließt ... das Stück' (SD, p. 461). If, indeed, Houwald lays any claim to distinction, it should be by virtue of the delightful critical dialogue that Der Leuchtturm inspires in Tieck's Dramaturgische Blätter. One aspect relevant to closure emerges: Tieck has been describing the convoluted plot of the drama that has inspired the dejection with which he returns from the theatre; his fictional partner asks, 'Und die Moral von der Sache? denn bei alle dem soll eine darin liegen' (*KS* III, pp. 118-19). Although the narrator leaves this query unanswered, the question yet emphasises one factor: that the *Erwartungshorizont* of the tragedy of fate does indeed impose the moralistic verbal tag favoured by the bourgois drama.

In extension to the unanswered query of Tieck's dialogue partner, the present study poses the following: whether the *Schicksalsdrama* is primarily a product of romantic sensibility and aesthetics, or rather, of Gothic and romantic motifs fused within the settings and ethos of the *bürgerliches Rührstück*. Here once again Tieck provides an astute hint: 'Nun vereinigt man dieses Kleinleben mit dem Atrocen (ich weiß nicht gleich den passenden deutschen Ausdruck), was mir noch viel schlimmer dünkt, als dies Iffland'sche Manier' (*KS*, III, p. 123). Already with Fouqué, Werner and, to varying degrees, Arnim, indications have arisen that what has earlier been characteristic of German romantic closure is in the process of becoming stylised, that the underlying ethos is shifting toward earlier conventional norms of didacticism and at least an outwardly-imposed harmony. Such a conjecture may be supported by the form of the tragedy of fate as well as by its closural practice. The subgenre functions by means of a linear plot development with, in most instances, a strict unity of time, place and action imposed. These strictures go against the mainstream of romantic form in the drama. By the same token, closure, except partially in the practice of Werner, does not correspond with the typologies posited thus far for the Romantics. Through the use of this double 'test control'--dramatic form and closural structure--the findings point away from Romanticism proper. The 'Schicksalsdrama' could, our results indicate, be designated a 'borderline genre,' primarily popular bourgeois-sentimental in form and ethos, but injected with popularized trappings of Romanticism on the level of content and motivation.

## 8. Grillparzer: From Schauerromantik to Biedermeier

On a superficial level, Franz Grillparzer, in his enormously successful début in the Viennese theatre with Die Ahnfrau (wr. 1816, perf. and pr. 1817), appears to be carrying on the Schicksalsdrama tradition in the footsteps of Werner and Müllner. The difference, however, between what Kindermann refers to as 'Müllners flacher Theatralik und Grillparzers von wahrhaft tragischem Atem gefüllter Schicksalsgestaltung' are typological as well as qualitative:

> Was Grillparzer jedoch weit über Werner und Müllner hinaus noch einbringt an unendlich theaternahen Elementen, sind alle die Züge des Wiener Volkstheaters und seiner Gespensterkomödien, seiner Geistererscheinungen.[108]

Within this 'Volkstheater' lies a yet more important distinguishing factor in the form of an enduring baroque tradition. While the impact of the European Baroque, and in particular, that of Calderón, cannot be denied throughout the German Romantic Movement, a certain distance yet separates writers in the German states from their typological forebears.[109] To the Schlegels, Tieck, Werner, Arnim and Brentano, the rediscovery of the baroque dramatic tradition is essentially a journey backward in time, while for Grillparzer, the forms and Weltanschauung of the seventeenth century have been infused into a living, developing theatrical ambiance. As Bauer succinctly points out, German Romanticism within the first decades of the nineteenth century approximates the Austrian drama in its incorporation of a superindividual and supernatural order which vanquishes the individual will; this constitutes in turn a major tendency of the Baroque theater. The German and Austrian modes of representation, however, differ:

> Il [i.e. le théâtre romantique] s'en éloigne par la conception plus mystique, plus vague, plus éthérée de l'ordre auquel l'homme doit se subordonner sous peine de tomber dans le péché d'hybris . . . le drame autrichien est essentiellement un drame de l'intégration du moi dans ce monde et ses réalités et non un drame du moi qui se dégage du monde pour sauvegarder ou restaurer son intégrité primitive . . .[110]

How and to what extent this 'integration' is accomplished will become apparent from a closural study of Grillparzer's dramas.

Die Ahnfrau, like Der 24. Februar, distinguishes itself from most German romantic dramas through its intensely focused, cause-and-effect-linked intrigue. In spite of long expository dialogues and introspective soliloquies, the trochaic verse form, laden with motifs of horror and foreboding, and the breathless pace of action dispense with the longueurs that afflict many romantic dramas. As in the Schicksalsdrama, Stimmung predominates, to the point that man, nature, objects, and the supernatural are concurrently voices of fate and its incorporation.

The intrigue is basically the working-out of a prophecy: only when the last Borotin is dead will the Ahnfrau no longer wander outside her grave. In this capacity, fate takes on additional dimensions. The source of the family curse and supposedly the silent catalyst of all its effects is the ancestress; at the same time, she is equally the victim of a dire fate, a restless life-in-death wandering. As a symbol, moreover, her plight both parallels and reverses that of the surviving family members, whose life is death-bound.

The ending depicts, therefore, the final stage of the prophecy -- the extinction of the Borotin line, with the concomitant release of the ancestress from her own life-in-death subexistence. In one sense, the outcome thus tightly closes the chain of events, leaving no room for further developments; in another, Grillparzer sustains action and tension to the very end of the drama, to the point that dynamic movement and reactions are only halted by the falling of the curtain. The structure of the ending is thus climactic.

To merely note, however, the presence of sustained tension and forward-driving active motifs does not fully represent the function of the ending within the implied ethos of the work. In Die Ahnfrau, three 'worlds' or spheres of existence are brought into interaction: first, the supernatural world of the ancestress, second, the relatively 'normal' but death-bound world of the Graf and Bertha; and third, the fully alienated outlaw world of Jaromir, symbolized by his emergence from the storm and desolation outside the castle. Although the drama cannot be said to contain three separate plots, the intrigue yet stems from the periodic convergence and divergence of these three levels of existence. In spatial dimensions, threat lurks both within and without the castle. When the Ahnfrau moves from her sepulchral haunts to the seemingly secure lighted areas, she injects fear; similarly, Jaromir's entry brings with him the violence of the lawless outdoors; the Graf's venture from within his secure walls to the forest accomplishes his death; as the action winds to its outcome, the setting changes from the lighted hall to the dark castle keep to the blackened chapel, and finally, to the graveyard outside the walls. The intrigue may thus be represented as an interweaving of the three worlds or spheres in the shifting dimensions of time and space.

The ancestress is primarily a background presence, an element of the set design, whose appearances function more or less as a leit-motif of impending disaster. Only in the ending, in the graveyard, does her role become active. Two minor tributary lines that feed into the plot development--the forces of justice, and the captured outlaw--parallel the role of the messenger in the Ancient tragedy, for they provide essential revelations at crucial points. In the convergence and divergence of these varying impulses of action, we are confronted with a density of intrigue reminiscent of the Baroque drama.

From a spatial and thematic viewpoint, two consecutive stages of the drama's development may also be identified. The first movement centres upon Borotin and Bertha, and concludes with their respective deaths, and the second focuses, until its final stage, upon Jaromir. At this point, the 'endings' of the first movement, temporarily suspended, are combined with the final situation of the 'Jaromir movement.' Once again, a Baroque pattern of convergence in the ending is visible.

The preliminary ending of the first movement, it is significant to note, is couched in suggestions and continuing action. The feverish words of the grief-crazed heroine, interspersed with gestures, give way to a tableau of silent motion:

> Aber leise--leise--leise.--
>
> sie geht auf den Zehenspitzen, mit jedem Schritte mehr wankend, auf den Tisch zu. Eh sie ihn noch erreicht, sinkt sie zu Boden. (I, [V], p. 688)

In yet another closure 'trick' which evokes suspense, Bertha does not take the poison for which she reaches. Her final collapse may thus involve either fainting or death. In this manner, the outcome of the first movement 'hangs over' until its re-emergence in the final action.

A new setting -- the gloom of the castle keep where Jaromir has hidden -- also marks a shift from external action to introspection. The final movement follows the hero's thoughts and emotions, interrupted only by Boleslav's revelation, the choral music announcing the Graf's death, and a near-encounter with the Hauptmann. The definitive turning-point of Jaromir's mental state from hope to despair, and from despair to renewed rebellion, precedes his flight to the churchyard, the introductory motif to the ending.

In the outcome, active and static motifs interract to simultaneously create a sinister mood and the impression of tense, fluctuating conflict. The scene represents, in effect, a 'verkehrte Welt,' where a declaration of love and demonstrations of physical passion are made to a 'sister' in a graveyard, where the already dead Bertha is substituted by her 'double,' a spectre, and where an unrepentant rebel denies 'Welt und Himmel' for the sake of his illicit passion. The ending does not accomplish a restoration of order from chaos, as does Calderón's *La vida es sueño* or Grillparzer's later *Der Traum ein Leben* (1817-1830; perf. 1834; pr. in full, 1839/40). Rather, the *Ahnfrau*'s revelation of her true identity, and the introduction of the 'suspended' outcome from the first movement, serve merely to halt the action, but not to cast it into a new light of hope or objectivity. As the *Ahnfrau*'s final words indicate, the 'ewge Macht' of the 'Schauernacht' ( I [V] p. 708) has prevailed. Her own return to the grave is devoid of all transcendent overtones; it is positive only insofar as immobility now replaces tormented roaming. The onlookers, moreover, offer no commentary. In a climactic final gesture of astonishment, '*bewegen sich die Eingetretenen gegen den Vorgrund zu*,' and an outcry of 'Tot!' concludes the drama.

In structure, Grillparzer's first performed drama illustrates several aspects of romantic closure. The action comes to no state of repose: impending developments are continually interrupted and modified by new and opposing impulses. The mental and emotional reactions of the protagonist also swing wildly back and forth, as in *Penthesilea*, from seeming resolution to renewed anguish. In content, no attempt is made at transcendence or tragic appeasement by means of a spiritual flight into a mystic 'Weltall.' Like the dramas of Kleist and, to a lesser extent, Schlegel's Alarcos and Goethe's Faust I, Die Ahnfrau ends in chaos. Friedrich Sengle emphasises this aspect as an indication of the ethos of the drama:

> Ob man die Tragödie aus dem Erlebnis der eigenen, schwer belasteten Familie, aus dem christlich-barocken Sinn für Schuld und Sühne oder als Ausdruck eines totalen Fatalismus deutet,--der desillusionistische Ansatz des Dichters wird in jedem Falle deutlich. Die leidenschaftliche, 'spanische,' in klangvollen Trochäen vorüberrauschende Rhetorik des Helden, zumal des Räubers Jaromir, hat nur die Funktion, den Sturz in die Vernichtung um so tiefer zu machen.[111]

Significantly, Sengle makes mention of the personal, Christian-Baroque, and fatalistic aspects reflected in the drama, but omits to place it in the context of Romanticism. The structure and function of the ending, however, reveal a culmination of tendencies already reflected in earlier German romantic drama; in particular, as a closural study of French romantic drama will reveal, Grillparzer's closure practice is highly typical of Romanticism in an international perspective.

The content and structure of Grillparzer's ending to Die Ahnfrau do not, moreover, constitute a sudden development in his work. The early drama Blanka von Kastilien (wr. 1809-10; pr. 1887), was not performed until 1958. A somewhat awkward youthful experiment with a complicated, unclear intrigue and wooden dialogue, it nevertheless emphasises the ambiguous role of virtue and its treacherous ability to turn to evil consequences.[112] The ending not only reflects this ambiguity, but maintains a break-neck pace of action, punctuated by gestures and outcries. The closing tableau illustrates the state of unrelieved tension to which the ending has risen: 'Die Anwesenden stehen voll stummen Entsetzens umher, unter immer näher kommendem Geschrei und Waffengetöse fällt der Vorhang' (II [V, ii], p. 792).

The theme of the alienation of the individual, or of the inability of 'chosen' persons to participate in the 'normal' pursuits of society, already noted in our study of the three alienated worlds in Die Ahnfrau, forms a prominent theme of Grillparzer's early dramatic works. The heroine of Sappho (1817; perf. 1818; pr. 1819) stands, as Ernst Fischer describes, 'zwischen der edlen Iphigenie Goethes und der tobenden Penthesilea Kleists.'[113] Her problem is essentially romantic: 'Das Leitmotiv der Tragödie ist die romantische Auffassung, da Kunst und Leben unvereinbar seien, da das "Genie" in heiliger Einsamkeit dem profanen Dasein gegenüberstehe.'[114] The double nature of the artist's experience, which forces him to be both 'puissant et solitaire,' leads, contrary to the opinion of Fischer, to no reaffirmation of the restrictions of social order. When the structure and function of the ending of Sappho are considered, it is clear that the heroine lives and dies divided. Although, unlike Penthesilea, her inability to reconcile superhuman responsibilities with superhuman emotional demands in the crippling limitations of human existence does not lead to a ferocious immolation of the object of her passion, the final destruction of self is none the less complete. A death wish sounds at the conclusion of the fourth act: 'O, la mich sinken!' (I, [IV, viii] p. 771).

The teichoscopic narrative of the fifth scene of the final act serves as the introductory motif to the ending by tracing the heroine's psychological progression from feverish agitation to preparedness for death. The ending presents the final stage of this psychodrama. A paradox lies at the heart of the outcome: that, from seeking human love and having this desire negated, Sappho comes to a full sense of self ('Ich suchte *dich* und habe *mich* gefunden,' [V, vi, p. 785]), and that this finding of 'self' leads to self-destruction.

The verse structure follows the rising emotional intensity that characterizes the outcome. From the relative fluency of the heroine's monologue on the immortality of her poetry (and the suspicion lingers that artistic genius, divorced from its emotional nourishment, offers no lasting appeasement), the verses become fragmented:

> Phäon. Halt ein! Halt Sappho!
> Melitta. Weh, sie stürzt! sie stirbt!
> (V, vi, p. 787)

As in *Penthesilea*, the brief commentary following the heroine's suicide merely confirms the deep divisions that have led to her death. With Grillparzer, however, gesture and exclamation create even more of a 'rising' motion than in Kleist's drama:

> Phäon. Tot?
> Rhamnes. Tot!
> Phäon. Weh mir! Unmöglich, nein!
> Rhamnes. Es ist!--
> (V, vi, p. 788)

Whether Rhamnes' closing image of the wilted laurel and the toneless lyre, and the imploring gesture of his upraised hands in the final tableau are indicative of either the 'integration' suggested by Bauer or the revivification of communal life remarked by Fischer remain questionable.

More pronouncedly than in the *Wallenstein* trilogy or in Werner's two-part drama *Die Templer auf Cypern*, the components of Grillparzer's trilogy *Das goldene Vließ* (wr. 1820; perf. and pr. 1829) are bound together by climactic structures of closure, causing action to 'overflow' from one drama to another. The ending of *Der Gastfreund* provides an overpowering instance of climactic closure in its combination of physical flight and calls of woe:

> Aietes. Medea!
> Medea. Über dich, über uns!
> Weh, weh!
> *sie entflieht*
> Aietes *ihr die Arme nachstreckend*. Medea! Medea!
> (I, p. 815)

The second drama of the trilogy, *Die Argonauten*, ends on a similar note with the outcries of Aietes after Jason's departing ship; here, moreover, a precipitous curtain falls upon the tableau of Jason and his followers boarding their ship, and the attendants of the prostrate king grouped around him.

The third component, *Medea*, serves as the grand shattering of the potentially explosive *mésalliance* forged in the first two parts of the trilogy. The cataclysmic collapse of a world order built on crime, deception and betrayal is graphically brought to a head in the ending. Here again, the plight of the outsider plays a major role. Medea, in her attempts to adapt herself to the pseudo-civilization of Crete, rediscovers, like Sappho, her true self. For her this lies in the witchcraft and fiercely vengeful nature of her race. Her cry, 'Ich lebe! lebe!' (II, p. 922), is ominous, for her discovery of her own reality and its accompanying scorn of the 'dead' forms of civilized existence in Crete lead her into an orgy of murder. When the 'dream' or 'illusion' of the baroque drama is shattered, an alternate reality ensues, an affirmation of the life that transcends the seeming of the world theatre. In Medea, however, the illusions of fortune and fame fall to 'Ein Schatten! / . . . Ein Traum!' with no replacement: 'Der Traum ist aus, allein die Nacht noch nicht' (V, p. 968). Medea's final words thus terminate the drama in a limbo-like wavering between two intensities of darkness. The sense of loss is further deepened by the echoing calls of Jason to the departing sorceress.

Ernst Fischer, remarking on the outcome of Medea, argues that it signifies 'resignation' and proceeds to explain this on the grounds of the baroque and Jesuit religious inheritance in Austria.[115] Similarly, Sengle sees in the ending a consciousness of Erbsünde, and hence maintains that Christian overtones are evident.[116] These assessments are not entirely supported by the content and function of closure. The outcome presents, paradoxically, a situation with no 'outcome,' and no counterbalancing of evil in the face of evil. The climactic structure further creates an impression of ongoing tensions.

On yet another level, Steinmetz argues that Grillparzer's trilogy is alien in form and content to those of Romanticism. Das Goldene Vließ, he maintains, has neither the 'breadth' of focus nor the episodic form characteristic of the Romantic Movement, while the theme itself, taken over from Greek antiquity, is atypical.[117] While the rebuttal of these contentions would require a lengthy study in itself, it may be argued that, against the background of European Romanticism, neither the form nor content are atypical. French and English Romantics, as well as the Schlegels, Hölderlin and Kleist among the Germans, reveal the interest in Greek antiquity, and the plot developments of dramatists such as Byron, Shelley, Hugo, Vigny and Dumas could indeed be called 'linear.'[118] A focus on the passions and lack of positive resolution are also not uncharacteristic. From the typology of closure, particularly viewed on a European scale, the dynamic, conflict-filled endings of Grillparzer are also highly typical. At this point, the question may well be posed whether Grillparzer, in his early period, finds his typological counterparts in dramatists such as Byron, Hugo, and Musset.

From König Ottokars Glück und Ende (1833) onward, Grillparzer's closure practice is modified. In place of the overflowing dynamic impulses of his earlier dramas, Ottokar concludes with the prayer, 'Und führ uns nicht in Versuchung,' followed by admonitions for effective rule (I [V], p. 1082-3). Although an upsurge of patriotic fervour closes the drama, the content confirms Sengle's assessment that a 'biedermeierlich' tendency now invades the closure practice.

Our overview of German romantic closure has now moved from its first developments in the wake of Sturm und Drang to the influx of a new era. Sengle, in his massive three-volume study of the Biedermeier phenomenon, suggests but does not definitively conclude that the period is actually a later development of German Romanticism.[119] A conservative movement which reinforces bourgeois values of home, family, and nation, it harks back, Sengle maintains, to the Neo-Classical canon of instruction and diversion in art, along with a self-conscious striving toward naive and folkoristic styles. An emphasis on form and the distortion of words to fit the demands of meter are also characteristic.[120] Relating to the drama, the choice of a suitable content within the chosen form is a major consideration: 'Die Hochschätzung des Stoffes entspricht dem Bedürfnis nach einer religiösen, weltanschaulichen, nationalen oder auch sozialen Funktion der Tragödie.'[121]

The repercussions of these strictures on dramatic closure are predictable. Tragedy must not be without its 'comforting' elements. When Goethe writes in his 'Nachlese zu Aristoteles' Poetik' (1827) that 'catharsis,' or a reconciliatory 'rounding out' of the intrigue is an absolute necessity, he expresses a foremost concept of the age.[122]

Despite the perspicacity of Sengle's observations, the influx of the Biedermeier mentality is perhaps not as pronounced as he argues, particularly as it affects closure practice. The concluding texts of our study will, it is hoped, offer some modification of his general delineations.

## 8. Romantic Closure: The 'Ausklänge'

To a certain extent, the 'Schwäbische Romantik,' a minor footnote to German romantic drama, exemplifies the ossification of closure in the molds of morality and conservatism. Ludwig Uhland's two completed dramas, Ernst, Herzog von Schwaben (1817) and Ludwig der Bauer (1818) are fully conventional in their meditative, reconciliatory closing commentaries. More original are the brief 'Posse,' Die Bärenritter (wr. 1809; pr. 1822) and 'Schattenspiel,' Die Bärenhäuter im Salzbade (wr. 1811; pr. 1835) of Justinius Kerner, along with the dramatic interludes of Die Reiseschatten (pr. 1811; rpt. 1834); their primarily comic, satirical content, however, precludes their present examination. Wilhelm Waiblinger's Liebe und Haß (1822), composed in the desire 'die Erd[e] auszubrennen' obviously did not achieve its purpose; the closing scene is nevertheless not to escape mention.[123] The hero, virtually a caricature of extravagant Byronism, is about to fling himself ecstatically into a 'Liebestod.' He cries:

> Jetzt naht der Brauttag! (schwärmerisch)
> Juble! liebes Mädchen!
> . . .
> . . . Jetzt bin ich lustig! Jauchze![124]

Whether this ending can be designated 'climactic' or forms a cachinnatory category of its own is hardly a pressing question. Among other experiments of the Schwäbische school, Mörike's Spillner (c. 1823) is basically an introspective monologue, and the 'phantasmagorisches Zwischenspiel; in Malter Nolten (1832), Der König von Orplid, seems typologically to border on Symbolism. The story of a world-weary king in a never-never-land setting, it represents time as a 'blutsaugendes Gespenst.' A closing tableau poses a symbolic riddle: a fairy holds a mirror up to the King, who, seeing in it first himself as a boy and then as a monarch, falls unconscious into the sea. This structure represents both a climactic staggering of action and a tableau; in its play upon the themes of youth and age, the former vanquishing the latter, a circular structure is also evident.

Other late survivals of Romanticism are represented by the dramatic efforts of August von Platen, Heinrich Heine's two juvenile dramas, various works of Karl L. Immermann (more noted as a novelist and as the director of the Düsseldorf Theatre, 1832-37), and the unstaged dramas of Joseph von Eichendorff. Among Platen's collected works, his parody of the *Schicksalsdrama*, *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel* (1826) does not represent and exaggerate the structure and content of the subgenre as aptly as Castelli's *Der Schicksalsstrumpf* (1818), where 'Schicksal' transforms himself into 'Moralino' in the closing scene to deliver the required moral admonition. His parody of the romantic drama, *Der romantische Ödipus* (1829; perf. 1855), is of far greater interest, and demonstrates an awareness of romantic closure practice. The 'hero,' called upon by the golden choruses of the stars, rejects the consolations of glorious immortality for the stronger demands of his ego:

> [Ich] will ohne Schuld, doch solcher Taten Täter,
> Lebendig steigen in die Gruft der Vater!
> (*Er legt sich in den Sarg; während der Deckel geschlossen wird, fällt der Vorhang*.[126]

This parody reveals several closure aspects: in the protagonist's determination that he himself will step into his own coffin, his union with and incorporation of fate; in his closing action and the precipitous curtain, a 'climactic' structure; and in the final stage picture, a tableau. Platen's dramas in a serious vein possibly merit more attention than they have received. The sketch *Marats Tod* (wr. 1820; pr. 1822) foreshadows Büchner's *Dantons Tod* in its closure practice. After the murder of Marat, the focus moves to a mass scene of confusion, which the closing meditation of Danton, a passive onlooker, in no way dispells.

His final words not only imply the continuation of action beyond the confines of the drama, but point ironically at the future course of the revolution, whereby the executioners will fall victim to the cycle of bloodshed they have started.

The two dramas of Heinrich Heine, Almansor (wr. 1820-1; pr. 1823) and William Ratcliff (wr. 1822; pr. 1823) reflect his early period, before he can be called a 'romantique défroqué.'[127] Almansor, a tale of love and death in a Moorish setting, hurtles with melodramatic force to an active close and a final tableau. William Ratcliff, of which a French translation appeared in the Revue de Paris of 1840, is, according to Heine, a 'dramatisierte[n] Ballade,' and marks the 'wache, mundige Sprache' of his early romantic phase ('Vorrede,' 3rd. ed., II, p. 964). Ratcliff, a wild and passionate brigand, murders both his unfaithful fiancé and her father. A Schicksalstragödie of sorts, the drama symbolises the fate hanging over the life of Ratcliff and the heroine by means of a 'Nebelmann' and 'Nebelweib,' ghostly figures who materialise in times of particular tension on the moors. Unknown to William, he is in part the avenger of his father and the mother of his beloved, for in an earlier blood-stained page of the family history, both had perished at the hands of the wrathful husband. The outcome thus closes the circle of doom connecting one generation to the next. The closing scene, furthermore, presents a coup de théâtre when an aged servant (the Shakespearean 'wise fool' of the drama) flings open a door of the closet where the dead bodies of the two lovers and the woman's father are concealed. A tableau of frozen astonishment is broken only by the laughter and raving of the old woman, who remarks that this second pair of lovers resembles those of the previous generation. In this way, the ending echoes the beginning of the tragedy, thus combining climactic, tableau, and circular structures.

Not only does Karl L. Immermann continue the characteristic structures of romantic closure in his dramas, but also, in his theatrical practice, his staging innovations aim, in part, at strengthening the visual, evocative components of the ending and furthering spectator involvement. As Kindermann describes, his inscenation of the final scene of Tieck's *Blaubart* in 1835 was particularly striking.[128]

Closure plays a major role in the *Alexis* trilogy of Immermann (wr. 1829-31; pr. 1832; perf. 1835). The first component, *Die Bojaren*, ends climactically with the confrontation between Peter the Great and his would-be heir, Alexis. The ominous words of the Czar, 'Gericht von Petersburg, nimm deinen Gang!'[129] direct the outcome to both the title and the content of the next drama, *Das Gericht von St. Petersburg.* This second component closes as abruptly as the first when, drawing back the curtain of an alcove, Peter reveals the dead body of Alexis, whom he has just poisoned. A tableau, symbolic of the current divisions within Russian society, ensues: while the elders of the community, who had hoped to supplant Peter with Alexis, fling themselves upon the body of their chosen heir in grief, the younger nobles stand in frozen astonishment around the Czar, whose tools they have been. In the centre, Peter, the controlling force, retains his impassivity. Finally, the third drama, *Eudoxia*, closes in chaos and uncertainties. To the background shouts of a crowd scene, the dead Peter's attendant muses on the riddles of the past, present and future: 'Du hast, das Rätsel deiner Zeit,/ Abscheidend, Rußlands Rätself *der* Zukunft vermacht' (V, pp. 246-7). The inanimate eyes of the Czar, he concludes in words of dismay, can read more sense into the confused world than he, with his eyes fully open.

In spite of the resolution of the fates of the major characters, therefore, the outcome drives back the events of the trilogy to their initial unrest and confusion.

On a surface level, the history of dramatic closure appears to swing back some twenty years to the practice of the early Tieck with the dramas of Joseph von Eichendorff. Here again we encounter whimsical fantasies with a deeply serious content. The bizarre 'play within a play' structure of Der Krieg den Philistern (wr. 1822; pr. 1824) and Meierbeths Glück und Ende (c. 1825-28), where mock battles take place between the proponents of poetry and of 'life,' where stage personnel mix with the actors, and actors abruptly abandon their roles, where members of the audience maintain a running commentary, and where first the poet and then the director walk into the plays of their own making, immediately recalls Der gestiefelte Kater, Die verkehrte Welt, and Zerbino. Upon closer examination, however, a great distance separates the early Romantic from the later. While both dramatists embody within their works a lively criticism of the theatrical practices of their day, Eichendorff attacks a tradition already strongly infused with popularised romantic conventions. He is thus a Romantic criticising and debunking the movement to which he adheres. In the outcomes of both the Philistern and Meierbeth, the ending is converted into a weapon for attacking the closure practices of his contemporaries.

The inner drama of Der Krieg den Philistern closes with a 'big bang' reminiscent of Körner's Zriny. In words pilfered from the textbook theory of drama, the audience reacts enthusiastically: 'Welch ein tragischer Effekt! (I, p. 557). The sudden explosion at the end of the 'inside drama,' comments one spectator, has now left him fully 'reconciled,' for it has raised him above himself (i.e., made him jump!).

The spectators continue to reveal their erudition. The presence of fate, they decide, has indeed been overpowering. Another happily announces that the endings of dramas have indeed changed within the last years: 'Man bringt es doch immer weiter mit dem Trauerspiel! Sonst war man froh, wenn einer vergiftet oder hinter der Gardine geköpft wurde!' (I, p. 557). In short, closure has become far more spectacular than it previously was.

At this point, the pedantic dramatist treads forth from behind the curtain. The play, he announces, is not yet over, for the 'reconciliatory' ending has not yet been staged. He proposes to add yet another scene: a systematic reconciliation of the abstractions incorporated in the drama; in this way, the 'third stage' (presumably the 'synthesis' of the Hegelian system) will lead the events of the drama downward to a point of repose. Furthermore, the choir is prepared to present the closing song. To all this, the audience reacts with scornful jeers: 'Was soll denn das? das Stück ist ja aus! . . . Stören Sie nicht den tragischen Eindruck!'(I, p. 557).

The outcome of Eichendorff's satirical comedy focuses on several aspects central to our study. It illustrates, in the first place, the 'autocritical' function of closure, or the ironic process whereby a drama turns inward, to discuss its own structure and content within the literary tradition of which it forms a part. Secondly, it confirms a major premise of the present study: that, within the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the structures and functions of closure are radically changed. These changes are, however, represented chiefly on a popular or external level. While the theory of drama still calls for 'tragic effects,' transcendence of personal concerns, and reconciliation, these elements--if they have any meaning whatsoever--have now ceased to be incorporated, the conversation of the spectators implies. Although the audience's mouthing of terms they do not understand causes them to appear ridiculous, the poet is even more silly in his pedantic drive to continue an action that has already ended. Fittingly, his 'Doppelgänger,' the Fool, replaces him on the stage, and, in an echo of Renaissance and Baroque closure, bids the audience to continue the neverending world theatre after the journey homeward; in this way, 'closure' is non-existent.

Eichendorff's next drama, Meierbeths Glück und Ende, parodies the mania for Walter Scott novels and Schicksalsdramen; the implied connection with Grillparzer's König Ottokars Glück und Ende (1825) does not go beyond the title (I, 'Anmerkungen,' p. 1014). Once again, closure functions as a satirical weapon in the attack against contemporary practice. The hero, averted by a gypsy that his beloved is his sister, indulges in a murder-suicide. His action begins a game of 'follow the leader,' and soon the stage is littered with dead bodies. In a parody of the 'tableau' ending, the gypsy stands in 'malerischer Stellung über die Leichen' (I, p. 596). In spite of his announcement that 'die Tragödie ist ja aus' (I, p. 597), each surviving character, either in accordance with the exaggerated violence of the tragedy of fate, or in a desire to to achieve prominence in the 'death tableau,' finds a means of ending his life. In a final touch of sarcasm, the director is made to appear. Aghast at the foolishness into which his drama has degenerated, he hangs himself. In an off-stage development, the Muse, who observes that tragedy is now a mockery, and that creative inspiration has become mere food for beasts, is immediately 'eaten' by the impersonation of 'Schicksal,' a drunk actor wearing a lion's costume. The death of tragedy is, in this way, announced well before the emergence of Steiner's study.

With parodic exaggeration, closure in Eichendorff's Philistern and Meierbeth marks another major development in the structure and function of the ending. The sensational elements, incorporated with some freshness and vigour in the early dramas of Werner, have become stylised. Closure has, Eichendorff implies, become a set of spectacular poses. The blame for this, he suggests, rests both on the popular Erwartungshorizont and on the willingness of dramatists and directors to fall in with the demands of a stultified theater.

The implication in the above endings that Eichendorff has rejected the structures and functions of the now popularised closure of his contemporaries confirms itself in his serious dramas. His Ezelin von Romano (wr. c. 1827, pr. 1828) and Der letzte Held von Marienburg (wr.?; pr. 1830) mark a movement to the conventions of the past in their incorporation of a sequel-commentary structure. In their final patriotic tributes, moreover, they join with the political conservatism of the Biedermeier movement.

## 10. Auto-Criticism and Weltanschauung: The Parodic and the Grotesque

Four directions of closure are visible in the final fifteen years of our study. Dramas such as those of Platen and Immermann have carried on the closural structures developed by the Romantics although, in content, a contemporary awareness of history has caused a certain note of objectivity to sound. Others, such as the later Grillparzer and Eichendorff, have gone the way of Biedermeier conservatism, joining the restrained emotion and resignation of this movement with Aristotelian-based structures. The comedies of Eichendorff, on the other hand, have made use of Tieckian content and structure to launch a satirical attack against conventions that are already worn out and sensationally exaggerated.

While Eichendorff parodies popular closure practice and indirectly condemns the quality of the German stage, his attack does not exceed the limits of mere criticism. With Ferdinand Raimund and Johann Nestroy in the Austrian theatre, however, parody cuts to a far deeper level. Not only the structures and conventional poses of the dramatic ending are ridiculous, they imply, but the emergent ethos is false. Reversals and transformations do not take place in the contours of life and human nature. In their parody of current structures and stances, they self-consciously elaborate the practice of their contemporaries until the overinflated bubble bursts, revealing that, after all, its filling was of air.

Like Grillparzer, Raimund and Nestroy reap the benefits of a lively theatrical tradition combining many components. In a remarkable convergence of the allegorical and didactic Baroque drama, welded with the scholastic theatre of the Jesuits and borrowings from the Italian opera, commédia dell'arte, folk spectacle, song and dance, the Viennese theatre is virtually the energy centre of the European stage in the early nineteenth century.[131] In a theatrical tradition, however, populated with type-characters and variations on standard intrigues, the eventual emergence of parody is foreseeable.

In the hands of Raimund, the Zauberposse transforms itself into a Zauberspiel--a game with the conventions of the genre. As Mautner relates, increasingly serious components are visible in the work of Raimund from Der Diamant des Geisterkönigs (1824) onward: 'Ernst und Scherz in ihrem Hin und Her werden manchmal untrennbar.'[132] Of Der Alpenkönig und der

Menschenfeind (1828) he observes, '[Es] ist an der Oberfläche ein Besserungsstück.'[133] The ending of this drama does indeed incorporate on a superficial level a strongly moral argument and places great emphasis on reason, symbolised by the 'Tempel der Erkenntnis' which emerges in the course of the magical Verwandlung accomplished by the Alpengeist. The happy ending takes the conventional form of a reunited and harmonious family life, the impending union of two lovers, and a turn from incipient poverty to reinstated comfort. Without hesitation, Sengle characterises the closural content as 'Biedermeier.'[134]

An alternate argument may, however, be advanced. First, the drama is called a 'Romantisch-komisches Original-Zauberspiel,' and not a 'Viennese-Enlightenment-Biedermeier-Besserungsstück.' An element of buffoonery is implied in the title: if the fantastic drama is a 'comic romantic' drama, and, even more importantly, an 'original' rendering of the fantastic, comic, and romantic elements, the ending is hardly to be viewed with the same seriousness as, for instance, Hölderlin's Empedokles. In this context, Mautner's earlier-cited observation on the intertwining of 'Scherz' and 'Ernst' in the later work of Raimund suggests that the work may bear a certain affinity with the romantic irony embodied in the fantastic comedies of Tieck.

Both the title and the content of the ending, moreover, suggest Kotzebue's Menschenhaß und Reue, which also depicts a reformed misanthropist and a happily reunited family. A sense nevertheless lingers that Raimund's drama subtly parodies its own proposed solutions. After viewing a caricature, a grotesque Timon-figure who transparently struts about the stage announcing his misanthropy, we are suddenly faced with an equally transparent happy ending. Although a sudden and magical reversal of fortune is to be expected in the universe of the Zauberspiel, the tableau that ushers in the new and transformed situation sweeps away all previous existential problems in the way that one set of stage props replaces another. One minor but significant verbal index suggests that the transformation is as tongue-in-cheek as the previous caricature of misanthropy: Astralagus, restored to his original kingly appearance, is surrounded by 'ideal gekleidete ALPENGEISTER.'[135] This 'ideal' costuming may provide a hint to the nature of the ending. Subtly, we are led to believe that the scene is perhaps a masquerade. This suspicion is reinforced by yet another deus ex machina trick inherited from the sentimental bourgeois drama, the motif of the long-lost relative who arrives bearing riches. Rappelkopf's cynical words at the arrival of his brother-in-law suggest that his transformation does not go as deep as we have been led to believe: 'Ach, das ist ein Schwager, den laß ich mir gefallen, der bringt doch was ins Haus' (xv, p. 410). Indirectly, this comment may also serve as a negative reflection of the crassly materialistic values which accompany bourgeois stability. One final explosive touch, reminiscent of the 'big bang' effect in Zriny, reduces the ideal Temple of 'Erkenntnis' to a mass of rubble. The final stanza of the Schlußgesang perform an ironic reversal:

> Erkannt zu sein wünscht sich vor allem die Kunst,
> Die feine Kokette bewirbt sich um Gunst.
> Und wird sie auch heute mit Ruhm nicht genannt,
> So werde den doch nicht ihr Wille verkannt! (xv, p. 411)

This is more than a verbal tag begging a favourable audience response. At this point, the work of art--or rather, artifice--turns inward to recognise itself. The reconciliatory ending now emerges as the work of a 'coquette,' a dissimulator, who readily adapts the content to answer the demands of the public, Johann Nestroy carries the parodic game with the ending even farther. Sengle devotes a lengthy section of the third volume of his *Biedermeier* study to the difficulties of interpretation posed by Nestroy's closure practice. In his opinion, Nestroy's endings pose a patriarchal solution to social problems, thereby connecting the Austrian dramatist with the Biedermeier movement.[136] Other critics have, however, hailed Nestroy as a pre-Marxist social critic, chiefly on the basis of the ending of *Der böse Geist Lumpazivagabundus* (1833), which, Sengle acidly comments, is a highly uncharacteristic example of his closure.[137]

If, however, other examples of Nestroy's closure are examined, it may be observed that, even more than Raimund, the later dramatist undoes closure convention by parodying its very structures. Like those of Raimund, his endings are sharply separated from the core text by a tableau of the requisite magical transformation. From *Die Verbannung aus dem Zauberreiche* (1828) onward, the structure of the ending becomes increasingly elaborate, marked by repeated tableaux, lengthy, overblown commentaries, and frequent musical interludes. By means of this multilayered structure, the ending, like a *Torte* whose layers are held together with an overabundance of whipped cream, collapses into parody. The outcome becomes a self-consciously created artifice, an impression achieved by reminders that a structure is being forged: as when, in *Nagerl und Handschuh* (1832) one suffering character sighs, 'Wenn ich nur einen Ausgang finden könnt!' (I, p. 403) At times, the dialogue takes on the tone of a dramatic script painstakingly read aloud:

> Wegen der früheren Respektverletzungen aber. . . bitt' ich jetzt zuerst meine Entschuldigung anzuhören. Hernach wird sich meine älteste Tochter entschuldigen, gleich darauf wird sich meine jüngere Tochter entschuldigen und zum Beschluß werden wir uns alle drei meiteinander entschuldigen (I, p. 406)

Underlying this parody of the reconciliatory convention of the ending is the awareness of an outworn tradition still maintained in the stultified structures and content of the bourgeois drama.

Romantic closure also comes under attack. The 'big bang' climactic ending, with its glorification of suicide, is vituperatively ridiculed in Nestroy's Der konfuse Zauberer (1839). The main character, defeated in love, is at a loss about his future actions. The natural and appropriate step to take, he is told, is to commit suicide. Symbolically, his adviser lays a pistol on the 'Rasenbank,' and instructs the desolate hero in the necessary procedure:

> Nehmen Sie diese Pistole, frisch an den Kopf gesetzt, losgedrückt, und die Kugel schlägt das alles aus dem Sinn. (I, p. 478)

In place of explosive romantic rhetoric, the tone is that of flat nonchalence; the instructions have the tone of a recipe for the preparation of Mehlsuppe. In other words, the theatrical convention of suicide when the anti-hero has been 'verraten und betrogen zu gleicher Zeit' (I, p. 478) is a mere sensational trapping. That a bottle of 'English spleen,' symptomatic of a form of psychological anguish later to be immortalised by Baudelaire, should provide the necessary inspiration and gestures causes the brunt of parody to fall upon the nineteenth-century theatre. By placing the closural motif of 'glorious self-annihilation' on the level of a convention, Nestroy makes use of ironic reversal to debunk both the content and the climactic structure of romantic closure.

The serious romantic drama, as we have observed in a large number of German examples, frequently breaks down the closural development into an aggregate of fragmentary situations by means of a collage structure.

These 'splinter-pieces' of the outcome often exist in a state of sustained ambiguity and tension. With Christian Dietrich Grabbe and Georg Büchner, however, the gap between desire and actuality is so far widened that the hope for eventual harmony vanishes. In short, romantic yearning or 'Sehnsucht' disappears. The collage structure now resembles a handful of dice scattered forth on a table, each die revealing a different numerical 'outcome.' Unity has been fully shattered; the universe incorporates a set of stunning but irreconcilable antitheses. At this point the grotesque infuses the structure and content of closure.

Ingrid Strohschneider-Kohrs distinguishes between romantic irony and the grotesque as follows:

> Das Wesen und die innere Tendenz der Groteske ist sehr viel weniger durchsichtig und eindeutig. . . . Sie sucht Suggestion aus bildhaftem Ausdruck und vermeidet ihrem Wesen nach die aufhellende Bewußtheit, die von der Ironie gefordert wird.[138]

In its original meaning of 'grottolike,' the grotesque offers no 'exit,' i.e. no fusion of the contradictions inherent in a given dramatic situation. In short, the ludicrously misshapen but demonic grotesque joins with the tragic, and chaos results from their non-cohesion.

The dramas of Grabbe drive the sense of the ending beyond Romanticism. Closure no longer hovers on the threshold of new action or swings back to repeat an unmodified cycle of endless conflict. Rather, it adopts different functions: in Herzog Theodor von Gothland (wr. 1822; pr. 1827) it marks, in spite of the climactic-tableau structure, the last convulsions of a grotesquely misshapen order bent on self-distruction; in Scherz, Satire, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung (wr. 1822; pr. 1827), a chaotic world emerges, where a Roman tyrant treads into the nineteenth century, the members of a sub-human bourgeois society clean the Devil's boots in alcoholic stupor, and the writer, in the final motif, enters his own work, bearing the lamp of non-enlightenment; in Napoleon, oder die hundert Tage (wr. 1829-30; pr. 1831), the collage structure represents two simultaneous frescoes of massive proportions. The opposing forces of Napoleon's troops and the British-German alliance hover on the crest of an action whose outcome is fully predictable; more important, however, is the central power figure around which the collage clusters of the drama revolve. In the above endings, the tension and lack of resolution of the climactic structure are represented, the lack of order and repetitiveness of the circular, the mass scenes of the tableau, the shifting situations of the collage, and the ironic reversal's undermining of apparent reconciliation. The ethos has, however, gone beyond Romanticism. As Peter Michelsen's recent study points out, 'Grabbe's Bedeutung als Dramatiker liegt in seiner Negativität. Von den mancherlei Vermittlungen und Verbrämungen, die das Zeitalter noch tröstend für den Menschen bereithielt, nahm er nur wenig an.'[139] While 'Gnade' and 'Erlösung' have not proved central to the German romantic ending, some element of desire or craving has yet been incorporated. In the dramas of Grabbe, the teeming masses of the dramatic universe clumsily perform their grotesque actions like the elephants of Hannibal; in the ending, they vanish into a universal void.

The dramas of Georg Büchner, by way of contrast, combine sublime and visionary elements with the grotesque; a process of fusion and transformation, reminiscent of Romanticism, may even take place: as when Lucile, caught up in the visionary imagination engendered by madness, views the guillotine in Dantons Tod as a 'Todesengel,'[140] or when Woyzeck, drawn into hallucination by the motions of nature, is filled with a sense of deathly dread (I, p. 409).

The structure of the ending of Dantons Tod (wr., pr. 1835) is indeed complex. As with a great number of German romantic dramas based more on a series of mental processes and situations arising from the interaction of internal and external forces, a 'plot' or 'intrigue' is virtually absent. Motivation is also lacking. An anti-hero whose tragic defeat has preceded the commencement of the represented situations, Danton reacts, but rarely acts. All desire or capacity for action has, moreover, disappeared. Peter Szondi observes that the ending of the drama represents the physical end of a hero already spiritually dead: 'Unter der Guillotine kommt Büchners Held zum gesteigerten Ausdruck seiner selbst: Dantons Tod ist das Leben Dantons.'[140]

The outward halt to the protagonist's living death does, indeed, come with the guillotine, which represents the culminatory scene of the drama. At the same time, no ending has been reached. While physical death denotes, at one point in Danton's thoughts, forgetfulness (I, p. 39), his view shifts from indifference to a romanticized idealism. Shortly before his execution, he asks, 'Was wird es helfen?' (I, p. 66), and directly reassures himself, 'Ich werde nicht allein gehn' (I, p. 67), thinking of Julie. The inner drama of the mind does not, however, resolve itself, and no suggestion of transcendence accompanies Danton's death.

The true movement and action of the drama occurs around Danton. Paralleling the anti-hero is yet another, the gigantic collage of the French Revolution. In spite of the outward determination of the protagonist's fate, the course of violence continues its route forward in time; Janus-like, it also looks backward to the events and conditions that have set it in motion. On the background of the 'gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte' (II, p. 425), therefore, the four final collage clusters that constitute the 'non-ending' are virtually paralysed and overpowered by the determinism that lurks at the heart of the drama. The ecstatic union of spirit and nature depicted in Julie's suicide scene, the defiance of a superhuman fate voiced by Danton at the foot of the guillotine, the lyrical transmutation of the instrument of death into a transcendent being, and the climactic rise in action and defiance accomplished by Lucile's suicide gesture are finally relativized, not by means of the dynamic to-and-fro motions of romantic irony, but by the uncompromising weight of a grotesquely-depicted, supra-individual force within history.

The unfinished state of *Woyzeck*, even in the admirable 'Lese- und Bühnenfassung' accomplished by Walter Lehmann, forces any discussion of the 'ending' to be conjectural. The drama is, however, even more than *Dantons Tod*, composed of fragmentary scenes which shift rapidly, almost haphazardly through time and space, and thus represent the feverish workings of a deranged mind. Not only in structure but also in content the romantic affinities of the work are evident. As Peacock summarizes,

> Büchner's moods of despair, cynicism, boredom, his motifs of death and corruption, his meaningless universe, his fatalism, his ear for a beautiful but also a sinister music in nature and the empty spaces, his glimpses into hallucination, nightmare, and madness, all these are the common stock of much romantic literature . . . . just as poeticization by the use of *Volkslieder* is a romantic, not a realist, symptom.[142]

What already, however, takes the content of Bucher's dramas beyond Romanticism is, in our view, the inversion of romantic motifs into the grotesque. If we view, for instance, the final collage fragment of the 'Lese- und Bühnenfassung' (I, p. 431), the bedraggled, dripping 'hero' tries pathetically to rewin the confidence of his child and the Idiot. The final attempt at communication deteriorates into a blabber of 'Hop! hop! Ro !' (I, 431). Even considering the non-definitive ordering of scenes from Büchner's manuscripts, this fragment bears a special significance. The alienated romantic hero has become a miserable outcast, and human existence, by implication, divided into the poles of the brutal and the victimized.

## 10. Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing overview of closure in the serious dramas of the German Romantics from the end of the eighteenth century to the onset of the Jungdeutschland movement, some impression of the vast complexity of the major directions has emerged. If any tendency has remained consistent, it has been that of the extreme heterogeneity of closure practice. Although the 'sense of the ending' among the early Romantics diverges decisively from the sequel-commentary structure still employed in this period, for instance, in the sentimental bourgeois drama, the climactic, collage and tableau structures recur frequently. With, however, the onset of the Biedermeier sensibility, a moderate swing toward pre-Sturm und Drang closure is visible, while, almost concurrently, the fusion of the ethos of the sentimental bourgeois drama with the external trappings of Romanticism in the Schicksalsdrama leads to a further imposition of reconciliatory, moralistic endings. More and more, however, it has appeared that the sensational use of tableau and climactic closure lead to parody and attack. Eventually, with Grabbe and Büchner, the structures of closure continue to reflect romantic practice, but the emergent Weltanschauung has gone beyond even the pessimism of the Romantics. Simultaneously, the juxtaposition of 'visionary' or 'sublime' motifs characteristic of Romanticism alongside the caricatured distortions of the grotesque suggest a movement beyond Romanticism.

## NOTES

[1] Although dated, Rudolf Haym's *Die romantische Schule: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes* (Berlin, 1870; rpt. Hildesheim: Olms, 1961) still provides an invaluable insight into the lives and interrelationships of the German Romantics. See also *Krisenjahre der Frühromantik. Briefe aus dem Schlegelkreis*, ed. J. Körner, 3 vols. (Leipzig, Brünn: 1936-7; rpt. Bern, 1958 and 1969); K. Weimar, *Ein Versuch über Voraussetzung und Entstehung der Romantik* (Niemeyer: Tübingen, 1968). Accounts by contemporaries include Joseph von Eichendorff, *Zur Geschichte der neuern romantischen Poesie in Deutschland* (wr. 1845-6) in his *Schriften zur Literatur*, in his *Werke*, ed. M. Korfsmeyer (München: Winkler, 1970), III, pp. 1-76; also in Vol. III, *Zur Geschichte des Dramas*, pp. 379-528, and *Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands*, pp. 529-925. See also Heinrich Heine, *Die romantische Schule* in his *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Jost Perfahl (München: Winkler, 1969), III; originally published in French under the title 'L'État actuel de la littérature en Allemagne,' *L'Europe Littéraire*, March 1-May 24, 1833, and in book form as *De L'Allemagne*.

[2] For a summary of the Romantics' critical assessments of the popular theatre, see Karl Georg Wendriner, *Das romantische Drama: Eine Studie über den Einfluß von Goethes 'Wilhelm Meister' auf das Drama der Romantiker* (Berlin: Oesterheld, 1909), pp. 54-9.

[3] A.W. Schlegel, *Werke*, ed. E. Böcking (Leipzig, 1846-7), II, p. 260, 266; cited by Wendriner, p. 54.

[4] Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler et al. (München: Schöningh, 1967), II, p. 241. Future citations from this edition will be abbreviated *KF-S-A*, followed by volume number and page.

[5] See Marcus Krause, *Das Trivialdrama der Goethezeit, 1780-1805: Produktion und Rezeption*, Mitteilungen zur Theatergeschichte der Goethezeit, 5 (Bonn: Bouvier [Grundmann], 1982), p. 224.

[6] Gerhard Kluge, 'Das romantische Drama,' in *Handbuch des deutschen Dramas*, ed. Walter Hinck (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1980), p. 186.

[7] H. Hettner, *Das moderne Drama* (Braunschweig, 1852), p. 7, cited by Wendriner, p. 59; Glyn Tegai Hughes, *Romantic German Literature* (London: Edwin Arnold, 1979), p. v.

[8] Among the few comparative studies, Charles Dédéyan's *Le Drame romantique en Europe* (Paris: Société d'Éditions d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1982) is of limited reliability because of misprints and inaccuracies. The scope of Paul van Tieghem's *l'Ère romantique. Le Romantisme dans la littérature européenne* (Paris: A. Michel, 1948) naturally precludes any

close textual analysis. Among works focusing on German Romanticism, Marvin Carlson's The German Stage in the Nineteenth Century (Metuchin: Scarecrow, 1972), although dealing primarily with the theatre, is of relevance here. Also highly useful is Friedrich Sengle's Das deutsche Geschichtsdrama. Geschichte eines literarischen Mythos (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1952); see as well G.C. Houston, Evolution of the Historical Drama in German during the first Half of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Haskell, 1972); Otto Mann's Geschichte des deutschen Dramas (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1969) devotes little space to the minor romantic dramatists. The most extensive single study of the major dramas remains that of Benno von Wiese in Die deutsche Tragödie von Lessing bis Hebbel (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1961).

[9] Kluge, p. 186.

[10] See Paul van Tieghem, L'Ère romantique, pp. 245-387; M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford, 1953); René Wellek, 'Romanticism Re-examined,' in his Concepts of Criticism (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 199-221; H.H.H. Remak, 'West-European Romanticism: Definition and Scope,' in Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, ed. N. Stallknecht and Horst Frey, rev. ed. (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 223-59; Ernst Behler, 'Kritische Gedanken zum Begriff der europäischen Romantik,' in E. Behler et al., Die europäische Romantik (Frankfurt/M.: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 7-43; and Norbert Miller, 'Ansichten vom Wunderbaren. Über deutsche und europäische Romantik,' in Kleist-Jahrbuch, ed. Hans Joachim Kreuzer (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1980), pp. 107-48.

[11] August von Kotzebue, Neue Schauspiele (Leipzig, 1798), I, p. x, cited by Krause, p. 107.

[12] On Kotzebue's extensive influence abroad, see Andrée Denis, La Fortune littéraire et théâtrale de Kotzebue en France, Diss. Paris, 1973 (Paris: Nizet, 1976), 3 vols; Herbert Jacob, 'Kotzebues Werke in Übersetzungen,' in Studien zur neueren deutschen Literatur, ed. Hans Werner Seiffert, (Berlin, 1964), Vol. 29, pp. 175-83.

[13] Das Drama der klassischen Periode, ed. Arnold Hauffen, Deutsche National-Literatur, Historische-Kritische Ausgabe, series ed. J. Kürschner, 138 (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche, n.d.), I (1), p. xxx.

[14] August von Kotzebue, Menschenhaß und Reue in Das Drama der klassischen Periode, I (1), p. 107.

[15] A.W. Schlegel, Ion (München: Hesperos, [1920]), pp. 94-5. See also the 'Nachwort' of this edition by Anton Pütz zu Adlersthurn.

[16] See Michel Riffaterre, *Essais de stylistique structurale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971), pp. 30-40.

[17] Kluge, p. 194.

[18] Kluge, p. 197. The source of Kluge's Kassner reference is identified as 'Die Mystik, die Kunstler und das Leben,' in his *Sämtliche Werke* (Pfüllingen, 1969), pp. 192 f.

[19] KF-S-A, VI, p. 283.

[20] On Tieck and the Gothic mode, see James Trainer, *Ludwig Tieck: From Gothic to Romantic* , Anglia-Germanica, 8 (The Hague: Mouton, 1964). The Gothic aspects of Tieck's work are discussed chiefly with reference to *Abdallah* (1792); only passing reference is made to his dramas.

[21] Ludwig Tieck, *Schriften* (Berlin: Reimer, 1828; rpt. De Gruyter, 1966), II, p. 288. Subsequent citations from the dramas are from this edition, unless otherwise indicated, and incorporated in the text as (Vol., p.).

[22] See Ernst Nef, 'Das Aus-der-Rolle-Fallen bei Tieck und Brecht,' *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 83 (1964), 191-215.

[23] Among others, the following works deal with the 'theatre within the theatre' in world literature: Ernst R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: Francke, 1948), pp. 289-93; Barnard Hewitt, 'Some Uses of the "Frame" in Playwriting,' *Quarterly* Journal of Speech, 32 (1946), 480-87; Sidney Homan, 'When the Theatre Turns to Itself,' *New Literary History*, 2 (1971), 407-17; Wolfgang Iser, 'Das Spiel im Spiel. Formen dramatischen Illusion bei Shakespeare,' *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 198 (1962), 209-26; Jean Jacquot, 'Le Théâtre du monde de Shakespeare à Calderón,' *Revue de la littérature comparée*, 31 (1957), 341-72; Jörg Kokott, *Das Theater auf dem Theater im Drama der Neuzeit*, Diss. Köln, 1968 (Köln: Gauder and Hansen, 1968); and, the most comprehensive comparative treatment to date, Manfred Schmeling, *Das Spiel im Spiel: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Literaturkritik* (Rheinfelden: Schäuble, 1977).

[24] As Marianne Thalmann remarks in her edition of Tieck's selected works, *Die Märchen aus dem Phantasus. Dramen*, Vol. 2 of *Werke in vier Bänden* (München: Winkler, [1964]), p. 904 (Anmerkungen), Tieck repeatedly expresses his contempt for elaborate stage trappings and spectacles. For one example (none are cited by Thalmann), see the 'Vorrede' to Vol. 3 of his *Kritische Schriften* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1852; rpt. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), p. xviii, The dramas available in Thalmann's

critical edition will be cited (*MuD*, p. no.). References to Tieck's *Kritische Schriften* will be abbreviated (KS[vol. no], p. no.).

[25] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Der Tod des Empedokles. Aufsätze,* Vol. 4, Pt. 1 of his *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Friedrich Beißner, Stuttgarter Hölderlin Ausgabe (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961), p. 56. Future references within the text will refer to this volume and edition.

[26] See, among others, Friedrich Beißner, 'Hölderlins Trauerspiel *Der Tod des Empedokles* in seinen drei Fassungen,' in his *Hölderlin: Reden und Aufsätze*(Weimar: Böhlau, 1961), pp. 67-91 for an overview of the interpretational problems connected with the ordering of the fragments. Also see Benno von Wiese, *Die deutsche Tragödie*, pp. 103-34; U. Hölscher, *Empedokles und Hölderlin* (Frankfurt/M.: Insel, 1965); Johannes Hoffmeister, *Hölderlins Empedokles*, ed. R.M. Müller,(Bonn: Bouvier, 1963).

[27] KF-S-A, V, p. LXXX. Further citations from *Alarcos* included in the text will refer to this volume and edition.

[28] Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn, 1936), 'Timon of Athens,' V,iv.

[29] G. Blöcker, 'Kleist als Dramatiker,' in *Handbuch des deutschen Dramas*, p. 176.

[30] Heinrich von Kleist, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in vier Bänden* ed. Helmut Sembdner, 6th ed. (München: Hanser, 1977), I, p. 148. Unless otherwise indicated, references from Kleist will cite the volume number and page of this text.

[31] On aspects of mistaken vision and cognition in the dramas of Kleist, see Walter Müller-Seidel, *Versehen und Erkennen. Eine Studie über Heinrich von Kleist*, 2nd. ed. (Köln: Böhlau, 1967).

[32] Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, ed. Norbert Miller (München: Hanser, 1963), p. 100. See Chapter Five.

[33] Hegel, 'Uber Wallenstein,' (1800) in his *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart, 1930), XX, p. 456; rpt. in *Deutsche Dramaturgie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Benno v. Wiese, Deutsche Texte, 10 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 122.

[34] Hegel, in *Deutsche Dramaturgie*, p. 123.

[35] See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, (1818-30) in his *Werke*, XII, XIII, XIV; see also Margret Dietrich, *Europäisches Dramaturgie im*

*19. Jahrhundert* (Köln: Böhlau, 1961), pp. 97-123.

[36] On the trilogy in German literature, see Horst Steinmetz, *Die Trilogie. Entstehung und Struktur einer Großform des deutschen Dramas nach 1800*, Probleme der Dichtung, 11 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1968), esp. 'Wallenstein,' pp. 56-71.

[37] Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard Fricke et al., 3rd ed. (München: Hanser, 1962), II, pp. 309-11. Future citations from Schiller's works within the text will refer to the above edition by volume number and page.

[38] See M. Maxfield, 'The Curtain: An Often-Ignored Structural Element,' *Comparatist* 2 (1978), 53-7, for a concise, insightful analysis.

[39] Ilse Graham (*Schiller's Drama: Talent and Integrity* [London: Methuen, 1974]), pp. 143-45, argues that Wallenstein's final words 'breathe a buoyant confidence and a sense of enlargement and liberation so positive and so radiant;' (p. 143) this indicates a new 'commitment,' 'an enrichment and a liberation which transforms his whole being' (p. 145). In view of the text, this appears somewhat over-enthusiastic.

[40] For an opposite viewpoint which maintains that Schiller aims at shrouding the actual world from his public, see Klaus L. Berghahn's 'Zum Drama Schillers' in *Handbuch des deutschen Dramas*, pp. 157-73.

[41] See Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, p. 99.

[42] This type of ending finds its precursor in German in Gerstenberg's *Ugolino* (1768); it is, nevertheless, also characteristic of such precursors of the melodrama as George Colman's *Iron Chest* (1798), Pixérécourt's *Victor, ou l'Enfant de la forêt* (1798), and *Coelina* (1800).

[43] *Goethes Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe, ed. Wolfgang Kayser and Erich Trunz, 10th ed. (München: Beck, 1981), III, 'An Graf Reinhard,' 7 Sept. 1831, p. 459. This edition will be used for citations from Goethe within the text, accompanied by volume number.

[44] KF-S-A, II, 'Athenäumsfragment 116,' p. 182.

[45] On romantic irony, two major studies are those of René Bourgeois, *L'Ironie romantique. Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à Gérard de Nerval*, (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1974), and Ingrid Strohschneider-Kohrs, *Die romantische Ironie in Theorie und Gestaltung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1960, rpt. 1977).

[46] Our assessment is somewhat similar to that of Robert Pichl in *Dualismus und Ambivalenz: Die Dramenschlüsse Schillers und Grillparzers als Indizien individueller Vorgangsgestaltung*, Wiener Arbeiten zur deutschen Literatur, 4 (Wien & Stuttgart: Braumüller, 1972). Pichl draws a contrast between the closure of the two dramatists, maintaining that Schiller incorporates a 'bewegungsschaffende[n], polare[n] Kontrast' in his endings, resulting in an 'äußere Zuspitzung' (p. 186). I question, however, the presence of a 'Schlußgericht' (p. 188) in the work of either Schiller or Grillparzer. The term has the implication of 'commentary' or 'verbal tag,' while I see the final statement frequently functioning in the way of a 'pointe,' marking the direction of tension and conflict beyond the represented close.

[47] See *Dramen*, II, pp. 1268-9. Schiller's emphasis on the final act's clarification and exposition of the first (Letter to Goethe, 3.4.1801) tends to contradict the intentionality of the sustained ambiguities.

[48] Other major studies, including those of Benno von Wiese in *Die deutsche Tragödie*, differ from Hegel's view. Schiller's usual 'Classicist-Idealist' description may here influence the determination to find traditional norms incorporated.

[49] *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, Kritische Ausgabe, ed. G. Amoretti (Bonn & Leipzig: Schroeder, 1923), II, p. 296.

[50] *Vorlesungen*, II, p. 297.

[51] Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter*, I, rpt. in *Kritische Schriften*, III, pp. 44-5.

[52] See Benjamin Bennett, *Modern Drama and German Classicism: Renaissance from Lessing to Brecht* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), Chapter 1: '*Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*: Theory in Practice,' pp. 22-56.

[53] See the earlier-cited view of Gerhard Kluge, 'Das romantische Drama,' p. 189. The persistence of the contention that romantic drama accomplishes an 'Auflösung des Tragischen durch das Christliche' (Benno v. Wiese, *Die deutsche Tragödie*, p. 351) appears to stem more from the highly partial and contradictory views expressed in romantic theory than from the structure and content of dramatic texts. Reconciliation, although desired in some instances, remains questionable. Reference to Morse Peckham's delineation of 'positive' and 'negative' Romanticism in his 'Toward a Theory of Romanticism,' *PMLA* 66 (March, 1951) 5-23) is here relevant.

[54] Stahl, *Heinrich von Kleist's Dramas*, Modern Language Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948), p. 28. This study is somewhat dated, in view of more recent conclusions dealing with the chronological placement of *Robert Guiskard*.

[55] Kleist, *Werke* IV, p. 737. As with *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, references included within the text are from the Sembdner edition, unless otherwise indicated.

[56] See 'Anmerkungen' in the edition of Kleist's *Werke* by Peter Goldammer and Anita Golz (Berlin & Weimar: Aufbau, 1978), I, p. 572.

[57] A similar ending is projected by Günther Blöcker in *Kleist als Dramatiker*, p. 177.

[58] See Ilse Graham, 'Der zerbrochne Krug--Titelheld von Kleists Komödie' in *Heinrich von Kleist: Aufsätze und Essays*, ed. Walter Müller-Seidel, Wege der Forschung, 147 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), pp. 272-95; first published as 'The Broken Pitcher: Hero of Kleist's Comedy,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 16 (1955), 99-113 (trans. in above text by author).

[59] See Graham, p. 292.

[60] See 'Anmerkungen,' *Werke* I (Goldammer ed.), pp. 585-89.

[61] *Werke* I (Goldammer ed.), 'Anhang,' p. 536.

[62] Marianne Thalmann, *Provokation und Demonstration in der Komödie der Romantik* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974), p. 101. Excellent documentation of *Amphitryon* *Stoff* from Plautus to Molière, Kleist, Peter Hacks and Giraudoux.

Although, as Siegfried Streller maintains (*Das dramatische Werk Heinrich von Kleists*, [Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1966], p. 97) the loss of 'Ehre' may contribute to Alkmene's torment, his emphasis on this factor appears undue. To view the differing responses of Alkmene and Amphitryon from an exclusively male-female perspective, to interpret the former mainly in the light of the 'ganz auf Liebe konzentrierten Welt der Frau' where the 'Bruch des Sittengesetzes' cannot be repaired, obliterates the significance of the scene emphasised by Thalmann.

[63] Walter Müller-Seidel, *Versehen und Verkennen* (Köln: Böhlau, 1967), p. 50.

[64] See Heinz Kindermann, *Romantik*, Vol. VI of his *Theatergeschichte Europas* (Salzburg: Müller, 1964), pp. 63-66.

[65] Friedrich Gundolf, *Heinrich von Kleist* (Berlin: Bondi, 1924), p. 117.

[66] See, for instance, Lawrence Ryan, 'Zur Kritik der Gewalt bei

Heinrich von Kleist,' Kleist Jahrbuch, 1981-82, ed. H-J. Kreuzer (Berlin: Schmidt, 1981), p. 356.

[67] See Benjamin Bennett, p. 56.

[68] Bennett, p. 55, 50. On the function of the ending, see also Arthur Henkel, 'Traum und Gesetz in Kleists Prinz Friedrich von Homburg,' first published in Die neue Rundschau (1962), 438-64; rpt. in Heinrich von Kleist. Aufsätze und Essays, ed. Walter Müller-Seidel, pp. 576-604; see also the perceptive article of E.E. Mason, 'In my Beginning is my End,' German Life and Letters, 31 (1978), 135-44.

[69] See Albert Béguin, Le Romantisme et le rêve. Essai sur le romantisme allemand et la poésie française (Paris: Corti, 1939).

[70] Roger Paulin, Gryphius' 'Cardenio und Celinde' und Arnims 'Halle und Jerusalem.' Eine vergleichende Untersuchung. Studien zur deutschen Literatur, 11, ed. R. Brinkmann et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968 ), p. 9.

[71] Friedrich Sengle, Das deutsche Geschichtsdrama. Geschichte eines literarischen Mythos (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1952), p. 52.

[72] Sengle, p. 52.

[73] Steinmetz, Die Trilogie, p. 111.

[74] Gretel Carow, Zacharias Werner und das Theater seiner Zeit, Theater und Drama, 3 (Berlin: Eisner, [n.d.]), p. 75.

[75] Otto Mann, p. 347. Mann does not, however, mention Werner's post-conversion drama, Die Mutter der Makkabäer (1816; pr. 1820).

[76] See Gerard Koziełek, Das dramatische Werk Zacharias Werners , Prace Wrocawskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego, 120 (Warsaw: Narodowy, 1967), p. 33; on sources, see pp. 33-5. The citation from Werner is from Briefe des Dichters Zacharias Werner, ed. Oswald Floeck (München, 1914), I, p. 118, cited by Koziełek, p. 22.

[77] Zacharias Werner, Dramatische Werke, ed. 'von seinen Freunden' from manuscripts (Bern: Grimma, 1840; rpt. Bern: Lange, 1970), II[1], p. vii. Textual references will follow this edition unless otherwise indicated.

[78] See Rudolf Palgen, Uber Zacharias Werners 'Söhne des Tals,' Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Romantik (Marburg: Elwart, 1917; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprints, 1968), pp. 140-3.

[79] See, for instance, Else Van Bellen, Les Origines du mélodrame (Diss. Amsterdam, 1927, Utrecht: Kemink & Zoom, 1927); Frank Rahill's study, The World of Melodrama (Univ. Park and London: Penn. State Univ. Press, 1967), is of less relevance, for it deals chiefly with plot comparisons between French and English melodrama. Re melodramatic closure, no structural-functional study yet exists. This problem will form part of my post-doctoral project, dealing with popular theatrical forms in the European and North American literatures of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries.

[80] Sengle, p. 59.

[81] On the influence of Calderón at this point of Werner's career, see Sengle, p. 59; Koziełek, esp. pp. 127-9.

[82] For Tieck's central statements on the genre of the novella, see his Vorbericht (1829) to Schauspiele and Unterhaltungen (1849-53), in Theorie und Kritik der deutschen Novelle von Wieland bis Musil, ed. Karl Polheim (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970), pp. 75-8.

[83] Theodor Körner, Zriny (V, vii, p. 144) in his Werke in Zwei Teilen, ed. Augusta Weldler-Steinberg (Berlin: Bong, [n.d.]).

[84] Heinrich Heine, Die romantische Schule in his Sämtliche Werke, ed. Jost Perfahl (Winkler: München, [1969]), III, p. 369.

[85] For a bibliography of Fouqué's works, published and unpublished, see Arno Schmidt, Fouqué und einige seiner Zeitgenossen: Biographischer Versuch (Oberhausen: Zweitausendeins, 1975, rpt. of 2nd. ed., Darmstadt: Bläschke, 1960), pp. 693-9.

[86] Schmidt, p. 167. According to Kindermann's Theatergeschichte, VI, the Bamberger theatre staged E.T.A. Hoffmann's Undine opera in 1814. Although fleeting reference is made to other Fouqué dramas staged at Hoffmann's instigation, this is not further elaborated.

[87] See H.A. Korff, Geist der Goethezeit. Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte, 5th ed. (Leipzig: Kochler & Amelang, 1955) IV, p. 259.

[88] Fouqués Werke. Auswahl in drei Teilen, ed. Walther Ziesemer, (Berlin: Bong [n.d.]), II, p. 94.

[89] Here, as in many other instances, I am indebted to discussions with Roger Bauer (Univ. München).

[90] Steinmetz, pp. 108-9.

[91] Joseph von Eichendorff, 'Zur Geschichte des Dramas' in Werke, III, p. 490.

[92] Roger Paulin, pp. 170-1.

[93] Paulin, p. 171.

[94] Achim von Arnim, Schaubühne, Part Three: Halle und Jerusalem in his Sämmtliche Werke, Neue Ausgabe (Berlin: von Arnims Verlag, 1857) rpt. Hildesheim: Olms, 1982), V[3], p. 186.

[95] Sengle, p. 67.

[96] See Sengle, p. 66.

[97] Clemens Brentano, Werke, ed. Friedhelm Kemp (München: Hanser, 1966) IV, p. 523.

[98] See Steinmetz, p. 111.

[99] 'Einleitung' to 'Zacharias Werner' in Das Schicksalsdrama, ed. Jakob Minor, Deutsche National-Literatur, 151 (Berlin: Spemann [n.d.]), p. 6, 12.

[100] Roger Bauer, 'Die Ahnfrau et la querelle de la tragédie fataliste,' Études Germaniques 27, ii (1972), 165.

[101] Jakob Minor, 'Einleitung,' Das Schicksalsdrama, p. ii.

[102] Bauer, p. 167.

[103] F.W. Stokoe, German Influence in the English Romantic Period, 1788-1818 (Cambridge: University Press, 1926), p. 13, 10.

[104] Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, 'Von der Tragödie' in his Philosophie der Kunst (1859; rpt. Darmstadt, 1960), pp. 337-48, rpt. in Deutsche Dramaturgie des 19. Jahrhunderts, ed. Benno von Wiese, Deutsche Texte, 10 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 22.

[105] Werner, Der vierundzwanzigste Februar in Das Schicksalsdrama, p. 266. All future citations from 'Schicksalsdramen' will come from the Minor edition, abbreviated (SD, p. no.).

[106] See Friedrich Sengle, Die Formenwelt, Vol. II of his Biedermeierzeit: Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution, 1815-1848 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1972), p. 357.

[107] Sengle, Biedermeier II, pp. 356-7.

[108] See Kindermann, Theatergeschichte VI: Romantik, p. 60, 61.

[109] On Baroque influences in German Romanticism, see S. Hardy, Goethe, Calderón und die romantische Theorie des Dramas, Diss. Heidelberg, 1962 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1965).

[110] Bauer, 'Die Ahnfrau ... fataliste,' EG 27 (1972), 165-92.

[111] Sengle, Biedermeier III, p. 81.

[112] See J.L. Bandet, 'Blanka von Kastilien ou les ambiguités de la vertu,' Études Germaniques 27 (1972), 193-206.

[113] Ernst Fischer, Von Grillparzer zu Kafka. Sechs Essays (Wien: Globus, 1962), p. 28.

[114] Fischer, pp. 28-9.

[115] Fischer, p. 33.

[116] Sengle, Biedermeier III, p. 89.

[117] Steinmetz, p. 118-9.

[118] On the impact of Greek antiquity, see, among others, Rene Canat, L'Héllénisme des romantiques, 3 vols. (Paris: Didier, 1953).

[119] See Sengle, Biedermeier, III, pp. 1026-39.

[120] Friedrich Sengle, 'Stilistische Sorglosigkeit und gesellschaftliche Bewahrung: Zur Literatur der Biedermeier Zeit,' in *Formkräfte der deutschen Dichtung vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, Vorträge gehalten im Deutschen Haus, Paris, 1961-2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), p. 133.

[121] Sengle, *Formkräfte*, p. 133-4.

[122] Sengle, *Biedermeier* II, p. 355.

[123] Waiblinger, Letter of June 21, 1822, cited from manuscript in Gerhart Storz, *Schwäbische Romantik*. *Dichter und Dichterkreise im alten Württemberg* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), p. 106. My thanks are due to the Philosophische Fakultät, Universität Hamburg for the loan of Joachim Höppner's dissertation (typewritten) of 1952, 'Wilhelm Waiblingers Dramen.'

[124] Waiblinger, *Liebe und Haß. Ungedrucktes Trauerspiel*, ed. A. Fauçonnet (Berlin, 1914; rpt. Nendeln: Kraus, 1968), p. 224.

[125] Eduard Mörike, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H.G. Göpfert (München: Hanser, 1964), p. 552.

[126] August von Platen, *Dramen und dramatischer Nachlaß* (Pt. 2) in his *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Max Koch and E. Petzet (Leipzig: Hesse [1909]), p. 151.

[127] See Kurt Weinberg, *Henri Heine*. 'Romantique defroqué.' (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954).

[128] See Kindermann, *Theatergeschichte: Romantik VI*, p. 73.

[129] Karl L. Immermann, *Werke in fünf Bänden*, ed. Benno von Wiese (Wiesbaden: Athenäum, 1977) V, p. 372.

[130] Benno von Wiese, *Karl Immermann*. *Sein Werk und sein Leben* (Berlin: Gehlen, 1969), p. 36.

[131] See Franz H. Mautner, 'Die Wiener Volkskomödie, Raimund und Nestroy,' in *Handbuch des deutschen Dramas*, p. 200.

[132] Mautner, p. 205.

[133] Sengle, *Biedermeier*, III, pp. 40-5.

[134] Sengle, III, p. 221.

[135] Franz Raimund, Werke, ed. Fritz Brücker and E. Castle (München: Winkler, 1960), p. 410.

[136] Sengle, Biedermeier, III, p. 220.

[137] Sengle, III, p. 222. The text from which Nestroy citations are taken is his Gesammelte Werke, ed. Otto Rommel (Wien: Schroll, 1962), I, II.

[138] Ingrid Strohschneider-Kohrs, Die romantische Ironie in Theorie und Gestaltung, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977), p. 245. See also Klaus Völker, 'Groteskformen des Theaters,' Akzente 7 (1960) 321-39.

[139] Peter Michelsen, 'Die Dramatik Grabbes' in Handbuch des deutschen Dramas, p. 285.

[140] Georg Büchner, Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, ed. Walter Lehmann (Hamburg: Wagner, 1967), I, p. 71.

[141] Peter Szondi, Schriften, ed. Wolfgang Fietkau (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), I, p. 260.

[142] Ronald Peacock, The Poet in the Theatre (New York: Hill & Wang, 1946; rpt. 1960), p. 192.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Closure and the English Romantic Drama

### 1. Nineteenth Century English Drama: Two Stages

A small revival of interest in the English drama of the early nineteenth century has taken place within the last two decades.[1] Nevertheless, the introductory note to the proceedings of a symposium (1971) on the British theatre of this period begins with these discouraging words:

> It is still fairly respectable to know nothing about the nineteenth-century theatre, but it seems unlikely that it will be so for long. The modest literary quality of much of its drama has made this period the poor relation of theatre history.[2]

Mediocre as the dramatic production of the period may be, the editors go on to argue, the social and theatrical context is important, for 'the roots of much modern drama are to be found in the experiments and extravagances of the nineteenth-century stage.'

When, however, we turn back another one hundred-fifty years from the above assessment, we are confronted with a far more despairing view:

> The age we live in is critical, didactic, paradoxical, romantic, but it is not dramatic. This, if any, is its weak side: it is there that modern literature does not run on all fours, nor triumph over the periods that are past; it halts on one leg . . . . Our ancestors could write a tragedy two hundred years ago; they could write a comedy one hundred years ago; why cannot we do the same now?[3]

William Hazlitt, writing in the London Magazine of April, 1820, is not a lonely voice of disapprobation. Sir Walter Scott's Essay on the Drama (1834) attacks the sentiment which is, according to him, rampant on the stage; this, however, he blames on 'the German taste' stemming from 'the wretched pieces of Kotzebue,' which has injected 'the *falsetto* of German pathos.'[4] Surprisingly, he condemns the sentimental and Gothic modes of the popular stage (the forms echoed in his own dramatic practice) and praises the efforts of Joanna Baillie, Coleridge, and Maturin, even claiming that Byron's Manfred is a match for Aeschylus![5] On the contrary, Hazlitt concedes that the popular stage has indeed produced effective melodramas, pantomimes and farces: the supposedly 'more legitimate and higher productions of the modern drama' are absent. Coleridge's Remorse, Maturin's Bertram and Milman's Fazio he dismisses as of little consequence, and, without the chauvinism of Scott, claims 'that whatever it [i.e. the modern English drama] has to show of *profound*, is of German taste and origin; and that what little it can boast of *elegant*, though light and vain, is taken from *petite* pieces of Parisian mould' (DE, p. 416). His reasons for this paucity of talent are those of an incisive socio-cultural critic. The French revolution has, he maintains, been made the scapegoat for all current ills. The true ground for the contemporary lack of creative inspiration lies in social factors. 'We have become a nation of politicians and newsmongers; . . . in men's faces, we may see strange matters written,--the rise of stocks, the loss of battles, the fall of kingdoms, and the death of kings.' In short, materialistic and political concerns have led to personal sterility, and rooted out the 'individual caprices, or head-strong passions, which are the nerves and sinews of Comedy and Tragedy. What is an individual man to a nation? Or what is a nation to an abstract principle?' (DE, p. 416). In Blakean terms, the present age is ruled by Urizen.

Hazlitt's probing analysis of the decadence of the theatre in the early nineteenth century is of central importance, both to a twentieth-century understanding of romantic drama in the English-speaking world, and possibly, to a clearer view of the European romantic drama. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Western world has undergone a cataclysmic experience. In the American Revolution, a colony has shaken itself free from patriarchal rule and proclaimed a right to self-determined democratic government. In France, a nation has risen en masse, deposed and beheaded its royalty, and unleashed a cycle of violence that has all but obliterated, in the popular British view, the heady slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity that, for a short time, had rendered even Wordsworth a revolutionary sympathizer.[6] At the time of Hazlitt's article, Europe has already witnessed the rise and fall of Napolean, and the British, in their insular, naval-bound security, have not been fired with the same superman-idolatry as a Grabbe in the precarious political milieu of the German states or a Stendhal in France. In Britain, conservatism rules, and the Romantic is placed in the alienated position that serves as the simultaneous curse and pride of his individualism.

Hazlitt's view of the theatre is inescapably individualist. The sense of belonging to a communal order, to a sacrosanct socio-political system which underlies the true significance of the 'verbal tag' constituting the commentary in Shakespearean closure does not correspond to his vision of the drama.

> If a bias to abstraction is evidently then, the reigning spirit of the age, dramatic poetry must be allowed to be most irreconciliable with this spirit; it is essentially individual and concrete, both in form and in power. It is the closest imitation of nature; it has a body of truth; it is a 'counterfeit presentment' of reality; for it brings forward certain characters to speak and act for themselves, in the most trying and singular circumstances. It is not enough for them to declaim on certain general topics, however forcibly or learnedly - this is merely oratory, and this any other characters might do as well, in any other circumstances . . . . The tragic poet (to be truly such) can only deliver the sentiments of given persons, placed in given circumstances; and in order to make what so proceeds from their mouths, at once proper to them and interesting to the audience, their characters must be powerfully marked (DE, p. 417).

Drama to him, as to Joanna Baillie in her 'Preface' to A Series of Plays in Which it is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind (1798, 1802, 1812), a title which reflects very little passion, is thus essentially a character study, an entry into the mind and emotions of an individual. A natural question here is, 'What happens to action?' Indirectly Hazlitt suggests that the articulation of feeling is, in itself, dynamic, and that the clash of characters within a drama may serve as the intrigue. As with Schlegel's Alcaros or Buchner's Danton, emotional reactions will replace the flow of action:

> Their passions [i.e. that of the characters] . . . must be worked up to the highest pitch of intensity; and the circumstances which give force and direction to them must be stamped with the utmost distinctness in every line. Within the circle of dramatic passion and natural action, each individual is to feel as keenly, as profoundly, as rapidly as possible, but he is not to feel beyond it, for others or for the whole (DE, p. 418).

What emerges from Hazlitt's view of tragedy is not a drama marked by opposing forces, such as the pattern of action and counteraction in Hamlet, where the forces undermining legitimate, responsible rule struggle with an opponent who, although weakened by an emotional and intellectual incapacity to take unequivocal action, yet represents the perpetuation of continuity and order. Rather, it suggests an anarchical opera, where each singer creates his own aria and tries to overwhelm the other. The progression from one state or situation is of negligible importance, for, as Hazlitt describes above, a 'circle' evolves, and, with his self-contained passions, the individual character does not feel or act for a communal whole. By the same token, the dramatist, although living in and through his characters, and not aiming to reach a 'general, speculative truth, and possibilities of good' (DE, p. 418) renounces his own ego only to arrive at the ego of another.

Hazlitt is not unaware of the paradox contained within this movement of the individual creative spirit to take up the poses and emotions of only one other person in turn. To do otherwise, he explains, is impossible in the present age. A dramatist can only 'move the world' if he has 'a place to fix the levers of invention upon' (DE, pp. 418-19). When an era is undramatic, the poet cannot act. The conclusion is extreme: 'Therefore, we have no dramatic poets.' The reader is tempted to ask why, then, has Hazlitt preceded this sweeping statement with an elaborate delineation of feeling in the drama.

The answer may consist in the very nature of much English, German, and, to some degree, French romantic drama. The theatre, a locus of the communal life and values of the Elizabethan age, has become an arena of rhetoric, and the drama envisioned by Hazlitt is a romantic ode with a multitude of speakers.[8] This spells the defeat of not only the traditional linear dramatic form, where an intrigue projects itself forward on the impetus of cause and effect. Rather, a dramatic form paralleling that of the episodic German romantic drama is suggested, a form characterized by lyricism, a kaleidoscopic shifting of perspective, and not a definitive outcome.

An additional paradox underlies Hazlitt's delineation of romantic drama. Collision and repulsion, he states, result from the interaction of characters; by extension, the dramatic *personae* are not 'like a set of profiles, looking all the same way, nor with their faces turned round to the audience; but in dire contention with each other' (DE, p. 418). At the same time, the isolation imposed on them by the overriding focus on the single ego implies that instead, both character and situation will resemble profiles, each turned in a different direction, an impression which, in the German romantic drama, has risen to an extreme with the work of Arnim.

In its accumulation of indices that contain the essence of the romantic 'theatre of the mind,' at least by implication, Hazlitt's essay constitutes for the purpose of this study a candid and revealing manifesto. Like all abstract delineations of an age and art, its application can only be borne out by textual confrontation; tentatively, however, it leads to two conjectures: first, that the forms of Classical, Renaissance, Baroque, and Neo-Classicist tragedy are to prove unworkable in the light of the dramatic theory and content envisaged by Hazlitt; a blending of lyrical and comic forms, akin to those of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night or Beaumont's Knight of the Burning Pestle, with their corresponding closural structures, disintegrating into waves of illusion dispersed by actuality and a quizzical counterpoising of the world of the theatre and the theatre of the world, seems to be demanded. Secondly, if the forms of the Shakespearean tragedy, mixed with Miltonic echoes and lyrical outpourings, are perpetuated, a hybrid creature will emerge. On the one side, the constant 'pitch of intensity' and flow of natural passion outlined by Hazlitt will, fused with the demands for renewed action and a spiralling intrigue posed by the Elizabethan drama, metamorphose themselves into the poses, black-and-white contrasts, and sustained tension of the melodrama. On the other, an opposing tendency, described by Hazlitt as 'the folds of self love . . . vague topics, general reflections, far-fetched tropes, affected sentiments, and fine writing'--accusations he proceeds later to heap high on the head of 'Mr. Wordsworth' and his 'poetical egotism' (DE, p. 419)--will result, in many instances, in a semi-melodrama, semi-meditation, replete with Shakespearean and Miltonic reverberations. From the viewpoint of closure, one conjecture would, on the basis of Hazlitt's essay, be valid: that in spite of half-hearted attempts to impose the mandatory 'reconciliation' or 'catharsis,' the intrigue will either grind climatically to a swift halt, or lie couched in uncertainties and equivocations.

In a recent study of English drama in the nineteenth century, Terry Otten--surprisingly, however, with merely a passing reference to Hazlitt's theatre reviews--reaches a similar conclusion regarding dramatic form, and, with great dexterity, connects it with a sense of the non-ending:

> With the new emphasis on character, on multiple aspects of one's experience, drama was no longer solely addressed to an audience attuned to the mythic implications of plot or common moral and ethical themes. Rather than affirming social and moral law, the character was now often engaged in a struggle to erect a morality within himself to counter the metaphysical dissolution he witnessed everywhere around him. Existence lacked solidarity, and action in drama ceased to move to an "appointed end." Instead of being an arrangement of incidents toward a given end, action acquired a new dimension: character often denied the resolution of external conflicts.[9]

The above observation concurs with the general conclusion regarding the unresolved ending already reached in our examination of German romantic closure. Again, however, a spectrum of variants will emerge from the 'constants' of the five basic structures we have posited--the climactic, tableau, collage, circular, and ironic reversal--when the structures and functions of English romantic closure are traced from the early to the late phases of the movement. In the course of such an overview, the printed page of the 'mental theatre' will prove as important as the conventional stage.

Both the nineteenth-century assessment of Hazlitt and the contemporary view of Otten have indirectly focused on the phenomenon of 'two stages' in the Romantic era in England. This somewhat arbitrary division between the works of 'Romanticism proper,' including the predominantly still-born creations of the major English Romantics, and the works of the popular stage continues to be an axiom of dramatic criticism of English nineteenth-century drama. Otten, for instance, refers to 'two kinds of nineteenth-century drama: conventional popular plays performed in the theatres and experimental dramas composed by major poets.'[10] Similarly, Allardyce Nicholl's standard reference work on the nineteenth century theatre points out that 'the romantic poets . . . are not seen in the theatre, not because they were kept out, but because they would not, or could not, go in.'[11] This parting of the ways between 'literary' and 'popular' drama is already a recognized fact among dramatists and dramaturgists of the Romantic era. The prolific playwright Planché's extravaganza, The Drama's Levée (perf. 1838) has as its main characters The Drama, 'in a languishing state,' flanked by her two quarrelling sons, 'Legitimate Drama' and 'Illegitimate Drama.' Fortunately for the popular theatre, Mother Drama is finally convinced that the so-called 'puff' of the frivolous theatre is not entirely without value.[12]

From the vantage point of the present, however, the 'two stages' are possibly not as irreconcilable as they may seem. Michael Booth's eminently sensible statement in his anthology of nineteenth-century British drama suggests a synthesis:

> A significant context for melodrama is the Romantic movement. The unbounded expression of emotion, the heroic individualism, the sweep of rhetoric, the richness of setting, the despondency and wild flights of joy that mark Romantic poetry also mark melodrama--to some extent all melodrama, but especially Gothic and Eastern melodrama, which flourished from the 1790s until about 1830. This kind of melodrama represented Romanticism in the popular theatre, and historians of the Romantic movement could profitably add melodrama to their field of study, for in the staging and subject matter of Gothic and Eastern drama the expression of Romanticism was far more extravagant than in any other contemporary art form.[13]

Supported by the above opinion of Booth as well as by the efforts of comparatists to establish a 'pan-European' typology of Romanticism within the historical boundaries of the last decade of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, the present study employs a somewhat unconventional approach to English romantic drama.[14] The differentiating factors between the 'poetic' drama of the 'core' romantic generation, represented by the star figures of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats and a number of minor writers such as Joanna Baillie, Charles Maturin, and Barry Cornwall (Proctor) are, in our view, inspired more from value judgements deriving from the status of a 'literary' figure than from essential differences of form, theme, and language separating the stage drama from the still-born one. Both employ stock characters, phrases, and situations, liberally sprinkled with sensational elements: if, for instance, Coleridge's Osorio (1797) is considered, a vagrant adventurer, a delicate heroine, a swaggering, sinister villain in the throes of passion and guilt, sudden and frequently supernatural events, and reversals of situation determined more by chance than by logical development,are all present. Little distinction can be drawn between these characters and motifs and those of Gregory (Monk) Lewis's The Castle Spectre (1797), except that the latter drama is written in prose and aims at a 'low-brow' audience.

A major obstacle to the integration of the reading drama, the occasional play by a major romantic poet accepted on the stage, and the popular production consists in the looseness of generic designation. A distinction should be drawn between 'melodrama' as a genre and 'melodramatic' as an adjective, referring to negative value judgements or the presence of spectacle and high-pitched emotional responses. That the melodrama is, on the one hand, a fusion of tragic, comic, bouregois-sentimental and musical elements, and on the other, a relatively rigid dramatic form is frequently overlooked in the temptation to apply the label to any drama considered inferior and sensational. At the same time, the propensity of genre to shift and fuse creates 'grey areas' in the midst of the period of our study.

The nomenclature in theatre compilations of the nineteenth century is, moreover, highly erratic. If, for instance, 'marked musical accompaniment' and 'the rewarding of virtue and punishing of vice'[15] are typical of the melodrama, Planché's English adaptation of Le Solitaire (The Solitary of the Desert Mountains, MS., perf. 1821), which concludes with a carpet of dead bodies--a heartbroken heroine and hero and an unforgiving uncle blown to pieces with dynamite--can hardly qualify in spite of its designation.[16] The insertion of a premonitory dream (III, i [n.p.]) and the double Liebestod carry overtones of Romanticism, while the transparent swagger of the villain ('~~Know ye~~ not that I am absolute here! that no human power can gainsay my will or shield thee from my vengeance . . . .' II, i) smacks of melodrama.

A practical recourse thus suggests itself: to view the English reading drama and stage productions en bloc, devoid of valuative distinctions, omitting those dramas which bear an obvious relationship to the sentimental-didactic mode propagated by Kotzebue and his imitators, and bearing in mind the collage of characteristics which serve typologically to identify 'Romanticism.' To maintain, moreover, that the Romantics 'modelled their plays on a dead Elizabethan mode . . . [and] . . . knew little about the theatre and cared less' is an overstatement.[17] Not only Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats were hampered by 'the burden of the past,' but also popular stage dramatists such as William Dimond (e.g. in Adrian and Orrila, perf. 1806) and James Sheridan Knowles (Virginius, pr., perf. 1820) reveal Shakespearean echoes. When, moreover, the avid theatregoing and reviews of Coleridge, Lamb, Hunt, Byron and Keats are recalled, familiarity with the theatre may well be assumed.

In England as well as in the German states, Romanticism marks a fumbling but sincere search for an alternative drama to rescue a stage which, like the Hollywood film of the twentieth century, had become popcorn for the masses. In the course of this search, the structures and functions of closure are progressively revised.

## 2. The Romantic Shakespeare and the Protesting Hero

In our overview of closure in the German romantic drama, the sense of the ending has emerged as an integral part of the ethos and aesthetics of the age. A similar phenomenon is visible among the English, and one of the major indicators of this tendency lies in romantic reinterpretations of Shakespeare. In one respect, the previously-cited contention of Otten concerning the Romantics' 'misreading' of Shakespearean character requires modification. The 'realistic portrayal of subjective reality' is not merely a projection of nineteenth-century theatre critics like Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt.[18] Rather, it is a general artistic attitude of the age, and underlines the extent to which romantic subjectivity influences the performing as well as the written arts. The extensively documented study of Joseph Donohue implies, in fact, that the stage precipitated both criticism and literary practice in evolving essentially 'romantic' interpretations of character.[19] The dramaturgy, closet criticism and theatrical performances of the era join, he maintains, to 'form a significant body of thought, attitude and supposition which helps define an age and its radical concept of dramatic character.'[20] With the renowned actors of what Donohue calls the 'romantic stage,' from John Kemble to Sarah Siddons, George Cooke and Edward Kean, 'the framework of a moral order in Shakespeare's plays, within which a character's speech and actions are made relevant to objective standards of good and evil, has in this new era disappeared or at least been transmuted out of recognition, leaving the dramatic character itself as the only source of meaning.'[21]

The reinterpretation of Shakespeare on the romantic stage is of major consequence to the 'practice of closure.' As Donohue emphasizes, when the stark contrasts of motivation and human character replace the solidity of a moral universe as the basis of interpretation, the protagonist falls victim to 'the lawless movements of an immoral universe.'[22] By extension, the Shakespearean ending is infused with force, vigour and defiance. No repentant, vanquished hero meekly accepts his just deserts. While our reference to the prompters' copies of Shakespearean tragedies has ascertained that the stage persists in the employment of the final commentary, this now deteriorates to the level of a mere formality, and is eclipsed by the violence of the protagonist's dying struggle.[23]

In accordance with British Empiricist philosophy, the performances of Garrick, Kemble and Kean, in the view of Donohue, reinforce the view that the essence of human nature consists not in action but in reaction.[24]

By extension, the concept of dramatic form, or the union of characters' actions within purposeful structures to make an integral whole, is subordinated to their responses at a given moment. A series of flash-perspectives into the personality of the major figures of the drama thus emerges.

Richard III supplies one example of the manner in which the emphasis on character transforms the ending. While Drury Lane Theatre actor-manager Garrick, and after him Kemble, made efforts to replace the truncated stage versions of Shakespeare's dramas with texts more closely approximating the originals, the Cibber promptbook of Richard III, introduced in 1699, continued to be used well into the nineteenth century. Written with a particularly dynamic actor in mind, this text lent itself to the portrayal of a highly complex, changeable protagonist with markedly pathetic traits. While the Folio stage direction merely states that Richard is slain after combat with Richmond, Cibber inserts 'a scene composed of ten lines in which two characters challenge each other, . . . nine more for a death speech, and for good measure seven lines of moral drawing from Richmond. The crowning of Henry VII provides a brief moment of spectacle, and then a truncated version of his closing speech ends the play.'[25]

Faced with this highly moralistic, expanded ending of the stage text, one wonders how it can be modified in the directions of what has elsewhere constituted romantic closure. Already with the interpretation of David Garrick, however, in the mid-eighteenth century, Donohue maintains that the text was embroidered with a sense of the tortured spirit of the king. With John Philip Kemble in 1788-9, Richard III's final defeat is transformed into an act of sustained defiance. In the words of a contemporary spectator,

> He had faced death as one resolved to conquer--but, victory fled, he would not be subdued--he would not sink to earth. When he felt his death wound, he seemed rather to throw life away, than to wait till it was wrested from him. He bounded ere he fell, as if to leap into eternity . . . .[26]

The dynamic aspects of the final situation in Kemble's role are thus at odds with the succeeding commentary. Even when allowances are made for the reviewer's hyperbolic enthusiasm, his comments reveal distinctly that both interpretation and audience reception has shifted to rest upon the conflicting character traits of the hero, and that the outcome is no longer a matter of rational justice, but a new phase of an on-going conflict cut short only by death.

In the same vein, an American critic during the tour of the prominent Shakespearean actor George Cooke describes his rendition of the dying scene in Richard III. The hero's repeated attempts to recover his lost sword and his final baleful glare directed at Richmond embody, according to this spectator, 'the life and living character of the monster Richard.'[27] The pinnacle of the 'unreconciled death scene' is reached in the performances of Edmund Kean, who fights, in the words of Hazlitt, 'like one drunk with wounds; and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is taken from him, had a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power!'[28] Again, this description indicates the way in which the sense of the ending has changed in the romantic era of acting and criticism. The raw material of the final conflict in Shakespeare's text is converted into a pantomime which contains in nuce the lack of resolution and the rising intensity of the climactic and tableau structures. Consequently, the verbal tag of the commentary, still present in the theatre text, is forgotten, to the point that the attention of the reviewer does not waver from the central character.

Other closural innovations emerge from a study of the Kemble promptbooks. In the preceding chapter, the adoption of thundering sound-effects in the outcome of so starkly Classicist a drama as A.W. Schlegel's Ion has been observed. Similarly, the handwritten insertions to the actors' texts of Kemble call for a 'Flourish of Drums and Trumpets' and 'shouts after the closing commentary in Cymbeline; for King John, the handwritten note calls for 'a Grand Symphony in the Orchestra.'[29] The death speech of Macbeth consists of a series of dashes and exclamations:

> 'Tis done! the scene of life will quickly close.
> Ambition's vain delusive dreams are fled,
> And now I wake to darkness, guilt and horror.--
> I cannot rise:--I dare not ask for mercy--
> It is too late;--hell drags me down;--I sink,
> I sink;--my soul is lost for ever!--Oh!--Oh!--[30]
> [dies]

In Shakespeare's version, significantly, the death of the protagonist occurs offstage, and a sequel-commentary far lengthier than that of the Promptbook ensues. The acting version, moreover, calls once more for repeated shouts, trumpet flourishes, and rolls of drums. Even, therefore, with an Elizabethan text which provides a formalized set of closural norms, a more or less climactic outcome is achieved.

The fragmentary, impassioned rhetoric of the hero's final speech cited above also sheds light upon the elocution of the Shakespearean actor in the Romantic era. As the Revels History summarizes, delivery is marked by an interplay of 'the physical resources of mime, movement, gesture and speech to convey a series of emphatic transitions.'[31] Here again the tendency of the romantic drama to convert the diction of closure into varying degrees of intense, abrupt emotional pyrotechnics is prefigured.

## 3. The Onset of the Romantic Movement: Closure in the Popular Drama

The preceding overview of closure on the romantic Shakespearean stage has revealed that the English romantic drama is not only obsessed with Bardolatry, but that the contemporary drama also injects its love of sensation and emotion into the fixed structures of Elizabethan closure. The tendency to absorb and to lend in return is not only symptomatic of the back-and-forth movement of literary tradition and innovation, but particularly of the eclecticism which could well characterize the Romantic era as the age of intertextuality.

This willingness to absorb the Stoff and structures of other works leads to our first instance of climactic and tableau closure in the popular English drama. So far as the present examination has been able to ascertain, Frederic Reynolds' Werter (perf. 1785; pr. Dublin 1786, London 1811), a dramatic adaptation of Goethe's Werther, represents a closural anomaly in the British drama of pre-Romanticism. It transforms the relatively static ending of the source text into a scene of continuing action and emotion. From the viewpoint of influence, it leads, moreover, to a major conjecture:

that the influx of German Sturm und Drang literature in the final years of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth may well have provided some impetus for the development of new closural structures.[32] In Reynolds' adaptation, the themes and emotional tenor of the German text lead to an ending that exhibits a great typological affinity with later romantic practice. In addition, the sustained tension of the ending may well stem from the British Gothic awareness of the suffering individual tied to the restrictions of fatal desires and the vagaries of his own emotional constitution.

Reynolds' drama is a pot-pourri of Enlightenment and pre-Romantic traits. The unity of time ('a night and a day') is strictly kept, and not only the rational determination of Charlotte to persist in the payment of 'that debt the generous Albert claims' to her hand despite her sudden love for Werter, but also the occasional stylized metaphor (e.g. the moon is referred to as 'Dian's light') affirms the drama's transitional nature.[33] Concurrently, an inversion of values, characteristic of Romanticism, is present, as when Werter claims to 'gorge upon despair' will satisfy 'the hungry soul' (p. 301). The hero, like Alarcos, Empedokles, and Penthesilea, flings himself into his fate of 'self-murder's doom'd damnation' (p. 301) with the same force as, in the course of the action, he repeatedly throws himself to the ground in despair. Partial repentance for his adulterous passion, however, in his determination to save others from his own infringement of sacred laws again injects a note of reason into the portrayal of an individualistic rebel. The 'Finale' of the drama (III, ii) removes this temporary restraint.

The final situation of Werter combines dynamic motifs with a deluge of broken exclamations and the freezing of a stage picture into a concluding tableau. Four central tensions are, moreover, poised in an unresolved state. First, the antagonism of the husband, analogous to the final scene of Vigny's Chatterton, continues unabated once Charlotte has, at the sight of the dying Werter, renounced both marital ties and honour. A related tension infuses the dynamic tone of the closing monologue, where the heroine, in her hallucinations, imagines that Werter 'trembles in his shroud' (p. 319) from the motion of his ascension heavenward, and beckons her to join him. Physical action, when the heroine 'falls on Werter's body' creates additional tension in the form of an ironic contrast between the illusions of the frenzied mind and the reality of the situation. Finally, the dropping of the curtain to 'slow music' seals and immobilizes the final situation, creating a tableau symbolic of grief and uncertainty. The spectator is, moreover, left in suspense, for the death of the heroine is not certain.

Other dramas of the 'borderline years' reveal a less distinct leaning toward new closural structures. Henry Siddons' Sicilian Romance, designated an 'opera' but verging more on what will later be called 'melodrama,' enjoyed a modest success in 1794. The ending tempers the remorse of a reformed husband-villain with the soothing words, 'Come, Madam, weep not; nor let the tears of virtue dim the lustre of this happy hour.'[34] Juxtaposed to this didactic-affective ending is, however, a 'dangling' motif--the unalleviated anguish of the husband--and family harmony is not definitively reinstated. A similar attempt to activate the static aspects of the conventional verbal tag emerges from another precursor of the melodrama, George Colman's Mountaineers (perf. 1793, pr. 1794). A pithy moralistic manifesto gives way to a colourful rustic chorus of goatherds, muleteers, Moors and peasants, a combination, therefore, of a mass spectacle and of the musical finale that is to characterize the closure of the early melodrama. The movement toward unresolved closure is even more obvious in Robert Merry's Lorenzo (perf., pr. 1791), a 'Tragedy in Five Acts,' which sets forth as its aim in the Preface to prove that 'Britons still can feel.'[35] The outcome combines a meditative tone with largely unalloyed sorrow and bitterness. Seraphina's belief in heavenly reconciliation is counterbalanced by the commentary of Lorenzo, who dwells upon 'the mutual agonies of fruitless love' (p. 81). These words, by driving back the thought of characters and audience to the represented conflict, achieve a circular effect.

The vogue of Kotzebue in the final years of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth, along with a persistent popular taste for the sentimental modes of the middle-class drama, tends to hamper closural innovation. Richard Heron's Kotzebue dadptation, Pizarro, or the Death of Rolla (1799) serves as an example. Concluding with an exhortation to adore and accept the ways of God, it recalls the fusion of exclamatory and didactic elements already remarked in our assessment of Kotzebue in the preceding chapter of the present study.[36] A lingering eighteenth-century influence is also visible in the ending of Henry Siddons' A Tale of Terror (pr., perf. 1803). A tableau depicting the resumption of harmony, reminiscent of the dramatic practice of Diderot and Kotzebue, gives way to a commentary which, functioning like an epilogue, halts the on-stage representation and abruptly shatters illusion with an address to the audience. This receiver-directed verbal tag has much the same 'full-stop' function as the formulaic address concluding the Baroque drama. In Siddons' play, however, it already represents more than a polite formality or a flattering obeisance to the audience; its function contains shades of ironic reversal in its abrupt shattering of stage illusion, allied with a drive to reinforce the 'terror' of the foregoing tale by predicting its replay on subsequent nights.

Viewed alongside closural practice in German drama of the same period (1790-1800), a certain timidity of innovation emerges from the popular British stage. Not only did Pre-Romanticism in England lack the rebellious and individualistic streak of the German Sturm und Drang, but also the strict control of licensing on the British stage contributes to this adherence to the sentimental-didactic modes of closure. With the post-revolutionary aversion to violent change, xenophobic fear of subversion, and nationalistic pride in the Parliamentary system, Britons looked askance at the rebellious content of continental drama. For these reasons, J.G. Holman's adaptation of Schiller's Die Räuber (perf. pr. 1799), although labelled a 'Romantic Drama,' is butchered beyond recognition.[37] As the playwright explains in the Preface, the drama's initial rejection by the Licenser was spurred by the original's 'junction of sublime virtue with consummate depravity' (p. ii):

> I was unable at the time to account for this interdict, having carefully expunged all sentiments that appeared to war against establishments and good order. I was aware of an objection which has been made to Charles de Moor, the Hero of The Robbers, importing that the grandeur of his character renders him more likely to excite imitation than abhorrence; but this objection I have ever considered as unfounded. For

> surely to exhibit a man whose youthful irregularities are the primary cause of his subsequent misery, and who, driven by desperation to a life of infamy, feels the most pungent anguish for his crimes, and expects that eternal torments will be his punishment, is so far from violating the purest system of ethics, that I am at a loss to conceive how a more forcible lesson of morality can be inculcated (pp. i-ii).

While the playwright outwardly admits that 'heroism dazzles the mind, and renders it blind to the atrocity' (p. ii), the decision of the Censor obviously leaves him non-plussed. The final product, and the ending in particular, mark an attempt 'to reconcile contradictions . . . to make "Angels of criminals"'(p. iii). This endeavour results in an insipid tale of Red Cross knights pitted against the Moorish heathens in Spain, and leads to an ending where Ferdinand (Karl Moor) is finally reunited with his father and his betrothed, while the iniquitous brother is brought to justice. With the heartfelt exclamation that 'Heaven ever blesses those who seek the bliss of others,' (p. 68), a song on kinghthood as the defender of beauty ends the melodrama.

Trivial as it may be, Holman's Red Cross Knights illustrates a major obstacle to the development of closure in the romantic drama in England. The structure and content of the ending are, in effect, shackled by strict political control and a prevailing climate of prudery. Consequently, dramatic closure, while already groping for new directions, will be less innovative than in German and French Romanticism.

At the same time, closural practice during the 'transitional' years of early Romanticism yet reveals that new impulses have infused the popular stage. Shifts away from the static and moralistic closure of the

Enlightenment resemble a collection of loosely-scattered strands, all pointing, however, in a common direction. The endings of 'still-born dramas' from the first generation of romantic poets will reinforce the underlying unity of basic developments.

## 4. From the Stage of the Mental Theatre: Closure in the Poetic Drama, 1794 - 1815.

The chapter devoted to nineteenth-century drama in Michael Black's fairly recent Poetic Drama as Mirror of the Will begins with a forceful assertion: 'It is time we had a revival of interest in romantic drama.'[38] From the mention of the major names of German and French Romanticism, he proceeds--somewhat apologetically--to include the prominent English romantic poets:

> We should add, for the sake of completeness, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron; though readers of English do not think of them as dramatists, they all felt they had as a matter of self-respect to attempt a verse-drama. This is partly because they were countrymen of Shakespeare, partly because they were contemporaries of Kemble and Kean, partly because they were aware of Goethe and Schiller, and the genuine growth of a national school of drama in Germany.

That the would-be poet-dramatists of the Romantic generation in England were indeed inspired to emulate the efforts of German romantic drama is dubious; even Coleridge, aesthetically the closest among English poets of his age to German thought, tends to construct his dramatic ideal around the edifice of a romantically-interpreted Shakespeare. Black does, however, incisively focus upon two of the major moving factors in the creation of the poetic drama in a generalization that applies possibly more to the English romantic drama than to the European. From Shakespeare's Histories and Romeo and Juliet, Black maintains, the Romantics derived two kinds of fatality:

> The first is the fatality of historical process - the working-out of vast political and dynastic processes on a European stage.
> ... This was a real feeling, an excitement; and in the era of Napoleon that active self-realizing energy was a natural interest. But it is the self inflicting itself on the world in action. The corresponding tragic irony - the insignificance of mere action, or the blind reversal of fortune - is equally simple and external. The second fatality is that of young love frustrated by those same impersonal social forces--politics, religion, dynastic interest. This is more tender, more lyrical; but only a self-aware passion has tragic possibilities. Romantic drama has an enormous sense of the theatrical . . . What was lacking was inwardness . . . all this verse was at best rhetoric or epic inflation. All the ends are external; so is the convention of 'character.'[39]

From this double focus on the Shakespearean history and romance, viewed, however, externally, as a process whereby the individual is placed within a larger set of dark forces foreign to him in their workings, stem two elements bearing upon closure in the poetic drama. First, the attempt to impose a meaningful pattern of progress upon history depends on the individual will and its real or imagined vision; in this way, it is also prone to defeat, faced with the impersonal, mechanistic reversals of chance. By the same token, secondly, human relationship becomes the prey of large, antagonistic forces once it is divorced from integration with a coherent order. In different ways, the dramatic experiments of Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, and Joanna Baillie are the rhetorical results of this drive to impose individual desire upon a set of unintegrated actions. The revolutionary dialogue *Robespierre* (1794), of which the first act is the work of Coleridge, and the second and third, of Southey, represents a process of wishful thinking imposed upon the poets' mutual reaction to the events of the French Revolution. In a more intimately personal context, couched in a framework of action deriving more from the elaborate gymnastics of chance than from an effort on the part of the characters to direct the development, Coleridge's *Osorio* (1797) combines the intrigue of the popular stage with the rhetorical outbursts of type-characters. In Wordsworth's *Borderers*, a vaguely-drawn background of British history provides the fund of coincidences which connect the true focus of the poet's interest, the stages of a psycho-drama, revealing the insidious manoeuvering of the mind and emotions of one character by the will of another. A split consequently emerges between the network of chance, which all too evidently forwards the destructive intentions of the controlling mind, and the intellectual process taking place between the protagonist and his 'Mephistopheles.' A similar problem impedes the movement of Baillie's *Series of Plays* on 'the stronger passions of the mind' (first collection, pr. 1798) from moving in a linear fashion toward their ostensibly planned outcomes. In their focus on emotional states viewed at different stages of intensity, her dramas contradict, it would appear, a move to envelop the collage-progression of spotlighted 'showing' in an end-directed process of 'telling.' Paradoxically, therefore, the endings imposed upon the dramatic portrait--collages of Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth and

Baillie, are non-endings, partially couched in a conventional drive to tie up in a wrapping of resolved action a set of rhetorical situations which do not fuse with the concept of linear narrative. For this reason, they illustrate to some degree the structures demonstrated to this point in our study by romantic practice, mixed with elements still derived from Shakespearean closure.

The dedicatory letter of Robespierre signals Coleridge's sense of discomfort with a 'Dramatic Poem' which, built chiefly around an emotional response to historical events, yet endeavours to combine action with reaction. 'It has been,' he states, 'my sole aim to initiate the impassioned and highly figurative language of the French orators, and to develope [sic] the characters of the chief actors on a vast stage of horrors.'[40] The problem of the dramatization does indeed consist in the substitution of intrigue with rhetoric. Robespierre becomes, in effect, a series of lectures, interspersed with a self-conscious recounting of action to serve as an excuse for further reaction, punctuated at appropriate moments by shouts, applause, or cries. Its movement--resulting more from a build-up of impassioned rhetoric than from a sense that intrigue has indeed mounted--is nevertheless upward. The final development, marked by cries of 'Down with the Tyrant!' (II, p. 514) coincides with the culminatory action, the overthrow of Robsepierre. In this sense, the ending is climactic, for a prophetic harangue directs the focus of the scene forward to a future when 'sublime amid the storm' (II, p. 517) France shall arise with 'the thunder-bolt of vengeance' and 'liberate the world.'

With more self-assuredness, Wordsworth's drama The Borderers

(1797 - 99, pr., with revisions, 1842[41]) focuses on what Geoffrey Hartman has called an 'intellectual murder,' in that the content deals with 'a murder planned by the intellect for an intellectual result.'[42] The central conflict and the ending are summarized in the meditative remark of Oswald (Rivers in the manuscript of 1797 - 99), an Iago-like villain who, himself once manipulated by another into the murder of an innocent man, determines, almost as an intellectual exercise, to dupe the idealistic bandit-hero into similarly losing his innocent faith in his own emotional judgement:

> Action is transitory - a step, a blow,
> The motion of a muscle - this way or that -
> 'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy,
> We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
> Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
> And shares the nature of infinity. (III, l. 1539-44)

In these words, the vision of suffering as a state of infinite darkness prefigures the circularity of the ending. From one point of view, the action of the drama, both internal and external, is more or less resolved with the outcome. The hero Mortimer ('Marmaduke,' 1842 version) has been 'enlightened' to the dire error he has committed in driving forth Herbert, the father of the woman he loves, to die on the moors. Repentance does not, however, signal the resumption of order. As to Schiller's Karl Moor or Schlegel's Alarcos, to Mortimer the consciousness of transgression represents a closed door to future peace or happiness. In one respect, however, Wordsworth's hero is, even more than those of Schiller or Schlegel, trapped in a situation of no reprieve. Like the guilty hero of Shakespeare's Othello, the protagonists of Die Räuber and Alcaros commit suicide, the one, by means of a noble self-destructive gesture which also entails appeasement, and the other, in a grimly despairing death. The 'solution' of Mortimer, however, represents even more of a huis clos of suffering than that depicted by Wordsworth's German contemporaries.

> I will go forth a wanderer on earth,
> A shadowy thing . . .
> Unnamed by man, and I will wander on
> Living by mere intensity of thought,
> A thing by pain and thought compelled to live,
> Yet loathing life, till heaven in mercy strike me
> With blank forgetfulness--that I may die. (V, iii)

He has thus doomed himself to wander on the peripheries of humanity, a fate which links him with The Ancient Mariner, The Wandering Jew, Peter Schlemihl, Don Juan, Faust and other legends that come to form part of the romantic mythology of the eternal wanderer. Although the idea of heavenly "mercy" offers some recompense, transcendence is absent, for death is merely an anaesthetic to pain.

Other elements reinforce the final circle of suffering and guilt which emerges with the outcome. The drama has in different ways illustrated the propensity of wrong-doing and injustice to transmit themselves, in altered forms, to new victims. In the wake of deception, Rivers builds up an elaborate framework of sophistry to justify the corruption of Mortimer; similarly, Eldred and the Female Beggar are spurred to retaliate against past injustices by creating new ones. Against this self-perpetuating chain of human wrong-doing, the blind Herbert and his daughter Matilda are, like the father and daughrer protagonists of Miß Sara Sampson and Emilia Galotti, defenseless. On another level, society falls back to no renewed order in the outcome. The Borderers remain in disarray without their chieftain, and the suspected guilt of Robert in inflicting the final death-wound to Herbert is not fully resolved.

Not only is the ending of The Borderers circular in its implied continuation of suffering and disorder, but also its development represents a series of collage stages. Two motifs, the one, active, and the other, static but bound, bring about the outcome. First, Mortimer, misled by Oswald into believing in the inequity of Herbert, leaves the old man to die on the heath. Second, a lengthy dialogue between Rivers and Mortimer reveals the former's machinations. From these two developments onward, the movement of the drama leaps from one fragment of represented action (or reaction) to another: the discovery of Herbert's death, the thinly-veiled lies of Robert, the woodmen's wonder at Mortimer's madness, encounters between Mortimer, Robert, Matilda, the Beggar Woman and the Borderers, discovery of a letter confirming Rivers' deception, the sudden appearance of the female Beggar with her companions and her confession of her lies at Rivers' instigation, the gang members' killing of Rivers, and finally, Mortimer's resignation from his post as leader of the troupe and self-imposed plight of wandering. In this shifting set of episodes, the dialogue is disjointed and exclamatory.

The Wordsworth of 1794-99 is closer to the European romantic tradition than the older poet of 1842. His movement toward stoicism and the shrinking of his earlier monistic vision into the contours of established Christianity are suggested by a comparison of the endings of the earlier manuscript and the published version. As the editor of the recent Cornell edition comments, the later version is "somewhat priggish" but "smoother."[43] Marmaduke (formerly "Mortimer"), in an echo of the wording and content of the Shakespearean ending, decrees that a monument should record his story, in few but "delicate" (p. 295) words so as to shield Idonea from the truth of his inequity. While Matilda (Idonea, 1842) in the earlier version suddenly disappears from the ending after the sudden and unexplained arrival of a group of friars, the hero now delegates two trusty bandmembers to care for her. Marmaduke's final speech, moreover, praises Stoic courage and specifies 'expiation' as the goal of his wandering (p. 295). Most important, the "bland forgetfulness" achieved by death in the earlier version is modified. Death now becomes a sign of the merciful appeasement of Heaven's anger, an indication that Wordsworth's thought has now shifted toward a Christian ideal of transcendant harmony. Although the ending continues to employ collage and somewhat climactic structures, their effect has been modified by the excision of peripheral details (e.g., the arrival of the friars in the first version), an increased smoothness of dialogue, and the partial harmony depicted in the final lines.

With Samuel Taylor Coleridge's _Osorio_ (1979; later revised and staged as _Remorse_ in 1813 at the Drury Lane Theater), the British literary drama not only reaffirms its links with Shakespeare, but also reveals its pronounced ties with the popular melodrama. _Osorio_ exemplifies one of the major innovations of romantic drama in its fusion of popular forms with the attempt to delineate the internal stage of the mind. Although the epigonal adherence to Shakespeare and the Elizabethan tragedy results, as in The Borderers, in somewhat affected and archaic dialogue, melodramatic devices impart a special verve to the action. The intrigue is tightly-packed and filled with surprise developments, to the degree that the motifs leading to the establishment of a final situation are isolated with difficulty.

Concurrent developments determine the content of the closing scene. First, the persecuted Moors, led by Alhadra, determine to storm the house of Velez to wreak vengeance upon Osorio for the murder of Ferdinand. Secondly, Osorio, visiting the disguised Albert in his dungeon, learns the latter's true identity and is, face to face with his supposedly murdered brother, overcome by remorse. Just as a stable ending, marked by mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, is imminent, the first motif intervenes to block the consequences of the second. The Moors storm the dungeon and seize Osorio. Once more, however, the ending swivels on the edge of reconciliation as Maria pleads for the villain's life. Violence then erupts in a suddenly renewed upswing of tension when Alhadra advances bearing a sword and the mob cries for vengeance. Finally, the Moors bear Osorio offstage, and his eventual plight is left unresolved. From this final active motif, the ending does not settle to renewed calm. Rather, Alhadra's closing words are dithyrambic in their wild enthusiasm. Oppression, she cries, vanishes once the oppressed no longer values his own life. Revolt, she continues, is thus transformed into a cosmic force, converting the desolation of loss into beauty. With this triumphant proclamation that the power structure will be reversed, the play ends on a pronounced note of prophecy and exultation.

The ending of Osorio thus employs, like The Borderers, a collage structure in its frequent and abrupt mixing of characters, motives and actions, along with a climactic structure in the final dynamic motif and impassioned utterance.

Although the main problems of Osorio are positively resolved, in that the tyrant is toppled, the lovers Albert and Maria reunited, and the Moorish vengeance complete, the collage and climactic structures still leave various strands of action in suspense. While Osorio's violent death may be assumed, it is not confirmed; Albert and Maria vanish abruptly from the action before actually plighting their troth, and the aged father Valdez is still innocent of his younger son's iniquity.

A handwritten alternative ending, affixed to the third manuscript of the 1797 version, further reinforces the play's links with melodrama. In this ending, the dynamic motifs are even more numerous, and the precipitous arrival and departure of alternate groups of Moors and peasants strengthens the kaleidoscopic effects of the collage structure. In an abrupt outburst of passion, Alhadra stabs Osorio, who falls into his brother's arms begging for forgiveness. At this point, a Moor rushes in to inform his cohorts that a fighting force, led by Valdez, is on its way. No sooner have the Moors rushed away than armed peasants fill the stage. In a wordless tableau which nevertheless maintains the action, the father and his supposedly dead son rush into each other's arms as the curtain falls. In this focus on spectacle, renewed bursts of action, and a sudden surprise encounter which is immobilized and held in a tableau, the climactic ending of Coleridge's drama has the frenetic action and accumulation of surprises of the romantic melodrama.

Sixteen years later, after Osorio had been submitted to an initially compliant Sheridan for staging, but had, as Coleridge complains, been carried about and ridiculed ('Preface,' Remorse, II, pp. 812-15), a revised version entitled Remorse found its way to the stage of the Drury Lane Theatre in 1813. 'The thing is but an embryo' (II, p. 1114), Coleridge had written in the preface to the Osorio manuscript 'and much obscure.' Remorse thus represents an attempt to clarify the complicated plot, an aim which judging from the drama's twenty-night run, succeeded at least in part. One major change is made in the ending: the villain-hero, now renamed 'Ordonio,' dies on stage, a move which, Donohue conjectures, is 'calculated at once to clarify Ordonio's end and to provide the thematic resolution left so uncertain at the conclusion of Osorio.'[44] The reader or spectator is, moreover, virtually whacked on the head with the 'instructive' aspects of the outcome. At the moment that Alhadra plunges her dagger into the miscreant, Ordonio cries out, 'Atonement!' (II, p. 879) and, in his dying breath, pleads to Alvar, 'Forgive me . . . Oh! - could'st thou forget me!' (II, 880). Much like Platen's romantic Oedipus, who insists upon closing the coffin upon his own head, Coleridge's villain-hero announces that his docility in face of Alhadra's attack has stemmed from a death-wish.

Now that the final situation has been established, moralizing statements mingle with expressions of joy, a tableau, and a triumphant family-reunion scene. Balance, as Alhadra proclaims, has been achieved: 'extremes bring their own cure' (II, p. 880). Remorse, Alvar states in the final commentary, is an 'inward Monitress,' who while she scares us, goads us to our fate' (II, p. 881).

Remorse thus presents what appears to be a conventional ending which ensues from the final dynamic motif. Two explanations could be ventured for this structure: first, that Coleridge follows a Shakespearean model religiously (reflected by many turns of phrase, such as 'Well it was done!' [II, p. 863]); or that, in the interval between his early works such as his Mariner (1798) and Christabel (1816), both of which elude confinement into a definitive 'outcome,'[45] and Remorse, his ethos has radically changed. The grounds, in our view, lie in neither of the above directions. Rather, the modest success of his drama on the popular stage and the structure of the melodrama should be recalled. While Donohue's assertion that Remorse 'represents one of the most ambitious attempts to give new life to time-worn theatrical traditions by infusing them with the spirit of a fundamental conviction of man's nature'[46] is valid, the leanings of Coleridge's drama in another direction are even more pronounced. The exotic setting is that of the Eastern melodrama; the sensational and spectacular events--sudden onslaughts of Arabs, disguise, sorcery, adroitly-revealed family relationships, and the exclamatory rhetoric, the transparent posturing of the villain-hero, externalized characterization applied with a heavy hand--all link Remorse with the melodrama. The moralistic outcome which simultaneously depicts harmony in a felicitous tableau is yet another of the features melodrama has possibly taken over from the domestic drama. Initially, melodramatic closure makes use either of a musical finale, preceded by token moralizing and a family tableau (e.g., M.G. Lewis's Castle Spectre, 1797), or of merely a 'pacifier' (e.g., Thomas Holcroft's Deaf and Dumb; or, the Orphan

Protected, 1802; adapted from Bouilly's L'abbé de l'épée, adapted in turn from Kotzebue).[49]

Coleridge's Osorio and Remorse bear, therefore, a significance from a closural perspective which possibly outweighs their literary merit. The two versions illustrate not only the sensational manner in which the Romantics endeavour to bring their relatively static psychological studies of the passions to a point of arrival, but also the close interlinkage of subgenres, such as the 'poetic' drama, the melodrama, and its moralistic relative, the domestic or sentimental drama--cast, of course, in a Shakespearean veneer.

'These dramas have two grievous faults: they are prolixe in the particular parts and slow in the general movement. But they have passion, distinct and diversified character, and they abound in passages of great moral and poetic beauty ' (II, p. 598). Surprisingly, the first of these two statements is not an auto-commentary on Coleridge's dramatic practice; rather, it forms part of a preface to his translation of Schiller's Piccolomini (1799 - 1800). Whether the translator's own lack of oral facility in German may have influenced his view of the 'prolixity' is an interesting conjecture; ironically, he also focuses on the English Romantics' major weakness--and his own--in observing that 'Wallenstein is a finer psychological than dramatic, and a more dramatic than tragic character' (II, p. 599). Notwithstanding his accusations concerning the original text, the ending of the Piccolomini is yet, in his translation, stripped of the greater part of the tightly-coiled climactic tension we have remarked in our discussion of the Wallenstein Trilogy in the preceding chapter. As in Remorse, a sentimental tableau concludes the translation: that of Octavio and Max in a farewell embrace. The agonized self-questioning of Max, trapped between opposing loyalties, has been dropped from the source text; although Octavio's series of implorations ('How? not one look/Of filial love? . . . I have a son no longer?' [II, p. 723]) bestows a mild climactic element, the embrace serves as an indirect answer. Even as a closet dramatist, moreover, Coleridge fails to realize that a curtain closing on an emotional tableau holds and extends its impact. On the contrary, the wooden exit of father and son on different sides of the stage precedes the lowering of the curtain. The Death of Wallenstein renders the sense of the original ending somewhat more accurately than The Piccolomini, although here the poised tension of the dialogue deteriorates at times into awkwardness: e.g., 'In a few minutes is my fate accomplished' (II, p. 811). Explication removes, moreover, the ambiguity of Octavio's final upward gaze. 'Octavio, with his whole frame expressive of sudden anguish, raises his eyes to heaven' (II, p. 811).

Of Coleridge's other dramatic attempts, only Zapolya: A Christmas Tale in Two Parts (submitted to Drury Lane Theatre and rejected in 1816; pr. 1817) was completed. Here as in Remorse, the ending of the second part, in its idyll of family harmony, suggests a certain typological affinity to the German Biedermeier. From the closural practice of the English Romantics to this point, in fact, a suspicion emerges that the true rebellious spirit, parallelling that, for instance, of Sturm und Drang individualism and early German romantic enthusiasm, does not emerge in England until a somewhat later period than that of the Lake School--particularly if the radical idealism of the revolutionary years is disregarded.

Two more dramatists, linked by their Scottish birth, claim brief attention before our view shifts once more to the popular theatre. Joanna Baillie, highly praised in Scott's Essay on the Drama, wins only lukewarm praise from Allardyce Nicoll, who comments that her twenty-six dramas 'far exceed[ing] the scope of that provided by any of her companions,' but goes on to observe of a scene in Ethwald (1802) that 'this love of tangled flowers [i.e., descriptive passages] agitating the breast of an Anglo-Saxon thane has no truth, no reality, no passion, it is an interlude, false and impertinent.'[50] The 'impertinent' playwright's dramas yet reveal a groping after new themes and structures. The 'Introductory Discourse' to her first Series of Plays . . . to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind (1798) represents a consideration of the form and subject matter of drama from which certain tentative steps toward new closural structures and functions can be deduced. She argues for an internalized drama of character which casts light upon the conflicting and ambiguous thoughts and emotions of the individual.[51] She decries, in effect, the orderly structure of traditional drama modelled upon Antiquity, where the hero moves from rebellion to acceptance of his fate, 'in which . . . great men and heroes, in the most beautiful language, complained of their rigorous fate, but piously submitted to the will of the gods; . . . in which strong bursts of passion were few' (I, p. 26). Had the drama arisen from its indigenous but less cultivated roots, she argues, 'it would have been more irregular, more imperfect, more varied, more interesting ' (I, p. 27). Where human character is the focus, the view cannot be 'pure and unmixed' or 'heterogeneous ' (I, p. 18). Fully-drawn characters do not 'reason upon the difficulties of their state' and 'pronounce long eulogiums on virtue ' (I, p. 32), but rather, transmit their feelings in 'irregular bursts, abrupt transitions, sudden pauses, and half-uttered suggestions, scorning all harmony of measured verse, all method and order of relation' (I, p. 30). By extension, her statements imply that the ending of the drama of character should also reveal ambiguities and abrupt, suggestive utterances.

This view is, however, contradicted in part in Baille's early dramatic practice, for her first tragedy, Basil (1798), replete with verbal echoes of Shakespeare, possesses both a sequel and an eulogistic commentary. De Monfort (1798, perf. Drury Lane, 1800) nevertheless moves several steps beyond conventional closure practice. On the surface, the structure of the ending is conventional. After De Monfort's arrest and death, the sequel moves on to depict the reactions and commentaries of the survivors. The motifs of praise and honour are fully expanded. At the same time, the playwright's notes reveal hesitation in the use of this traditional structure. On the concluding eulogy of the hero, she comments that 'the last three lines of the last speech are not intended to give the reader a true character of De Monfort . . . but only to express the partial sentiments of an affectionate sister' (I, p. 41). Earlier, at the point where De Monfort is seized for murder, she notes that, in future productions, 'the curtain should drop here' (I, p. 399). The alternate ending, here tentatively indicated, depicts the hero in a proudly defiant stance, and closes the drama with a dynamic motif that eschews all dialogue or commentary. Although the hero's fate is already sealed at this point, omission of the succeeding scenes would sustain the tension of the emotionally-charged scene in its focus on De Monfort, 'endeavour[ing] to suppress his feelings,' and would thus create a structure concurrently climactic and tableau.

Among Baillie's later dramas, little closural experimentation emerges. The Martyr (1826) contains a sudden reversal: a Christian martyr, on the verge of assuaging a lion's appetite, is suddenly pierced to the heart by an arrow shot from the spectator gallery! The next development is equally surprising, for the archer, risking a circular perpetuation of the feeding process, dashes down to the pit to witness the seraphic parting smile of his victim. Whether the audience is left in suspense regarding the reaction of 'Nero's ruthless eye'[52] is a matter of individual reception. The ending of Henriquez (1836) combines a tableau and a climactic structure. These two hesitant and awkwardly handled outcomes from Baillie's later work represent, it may be conjectured, half-hearted attempts to concur with structures that have at this time come into the forefront of English as well as Continental dramatic closure. With reason, Allardyce Nicoll describes her as 'having one foot in the eighteenth and one foot in the nineteenth century,' an observation borne out by her closure practice.[53]

One of Baillie's great admirers, Sir Walter Scott, also experimented with drama. His first efforts reflect the 'German taste' he so categorically attacks in his 'Essay on the Drama.' As Stokoe summarizes, his studies in German, never particularly accurate, begin in 1792, and, with his first translations of Bürger, contributed to the vogue which sent 'the clatter of Lenore's demon-horse . . . furiously through Britain.'[54] After several unpublished attempts at translations from German drama, his Götz von

Berlichingen appeared in 1799. A notoriously inaccurate translation, it yet renders fairly literally the content of Geothe's outcome, although the diction loses the elegiac tone of the original.[55] Scott's first drama, The House of Aspen (wr. 1799; pr. 1829) borrows, according to his foreward to the published version, 'the substance of the story and a part of the diction from a dramatic romance called "Der heilige Vehmé" . . . which fills the sixth volume of the "Sagen der Vorzeit," (Tales of Antiquity) by Beit Weber.'[56] The name, obviously a mis-spelling of 'Veit Weber,' links Scott with other British translations and reworkings of the 'Vehmgericht' motif, such as the 1794 translation of Benedikte Naubert's Hermannof Unna, and the popular drama based on it, James Boaden's The Secret Tribunal (1795). The partially reconciliatory ending, moreover, of The House of Aspen is typical of the Gothic drama (e.g. Robert Jephson, The Count of Narbonne, 1781, and Henry Siddons, The Sicilian Romance, 1794). In its prime emphasis on intrigue in a gloomy medieval setting, this creation of a so-called 'literary' figure contradicts the ever-repeated assertion that character is the chief preoccupation of the English romantic dramatist. The House of Aspen is a swiftly-moving drama of situation rather than character; dialogue is clipped, and the pseudo-Shakespearean diction of Coleridge is absent.

Scott's ending is fraught with the typical suspense of the melodrama as, armed with a fatal secret from Isabella of Aspen's past, the members of the secret order of judges meet to 'punish those offenders whom the sword of justice cannot reach' (V, p. 281). In the first act of the drama, the elaborate twistings of intrigue have built the foundations of the climax, a sinister meeting of the disguised members of the secret society. Suspense and horror are effectively knit together in the elaborate pantomimic ritual of the trial as first the guilty woman's son, who has, in act act of selfless loyalty, perjured himself to save her life, and later, the mother herself, are put to death. Each conviction and murder constitutes, in effect, a stage of the climax and of the ending. With instinctive skill, Scott intersperses clipped dialogue with a series of tableaux suggestive of horror:

> Eldest Member: How shall I stand there, stained
> with the blood of such a man?
>
> Roderick: How wilt thou stand before that throne,
> loaded with the guilt of a broken oath? . . .
>
> Eld. Mem.: So be it, in the name of God!
>
> [He takes the dagger from the alter, goes slowly towards the back scene, and reluctantly enters the sacristy.]
>
> Eldest Judge [from behind the scene]: Dost thou
> forgive me?
>
> Geo. [behind]: I do! [He is heard to fall heavily.]
>
> [Re-enter the old judge from the sacristy. He lays on the alter the bloddy dagger.]
>
> Rod: Hast thou done thy duty?
>
> Eldest Mem.: I have. [He faints.]
>
> Rod.: He swoons. Remove him. (V, pp. 296-7)

The ritual of accusation, judgement, and reluctant justice repeats itself with Isabella. While each stage represents a new component of the final situation, tension simultaneously mounts as the wheel of vengeance goes out of control. With an almost Kleistian power of suggestion, motion and silences result in action:

> [Bertram whispers.
>
> Rod.: This goes beyond me. [After a moment's thought]
> But be it so . . . .
>
> [All muffle their faces.]
>
> (V, p. 301)

The final twist of action, however, directs the third stage of the ending toward a self-consciously achieved 'poetic justice.' At the moment that an innocent member of the family is about to be murdered, a deus ex machina occurs: the Duke of Bavaria majestically sweeps in, doles out the appropriate punishment, and brings the action to a stable close, still marked, however, by grief. A mixture of fatality and reconciliation characterizes his final words:

> Never shall he [the aged Baron of Aspen] know the dreadful secret. Be it mine to soothe his sorrows, and to restore the honour of the House of Aspen. (V, p. 306)

Scott's House of Aspen represents, in our view, a major touchstone in the development of English closure. Unpublished and unstaged until 1829, it yet reveals, in its skilled handling of dialogue and pantomime, a fruitful direction for romantic closure. A hybrid compound of historical motifs, Gothic horrors, and ineffable fatality, its final situations evolve swiftly, interspersed with speech, silence, action, and reaction. Only the highly contrived arrival of the Duke suggests a return to conventional structures, an awkward attempt at a 'band-aid' solution. In its graphic suggestions, moreover, of a historical fatalism, or the propensity of human power to pervert itself in ways that contradict its initially positive intentions, it also contains a depth of implication absent in the fulsome moralizing of Coleridge or Baillie.

One reason that the nascent innovative skill of Scott's closure practice in The House of Aspen has been overlooked may lie in the eagerness of critics such as Nicoll, Donohue, and Otten to perpetuate the view that all English romantic drama focuses on character or passion and represents a feeble attempt to emulate Shakespeare. A wider awareness of the designation 'romantic' appears to be demanded. From the dramatic experiments of the final years of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth century viewed thus far in our study, certain tendencies that counteract the static emphasis on character stemming from romantic readings of Shakespeare have been prefigured. The ending of the Borderers has revealed a partial breakdown of traditional dramatic structure. Although a somewhat wooden attempt is made to unravel the network of hidden scheming that has caused the hero's downfall, the collage-like array of stages in his disintegration has revealed a movement beyond the 'full-stop' ending. Similarly, closure in Scott's House of Aspen has been rendered effective by the creation of atmosphere, gesture, and an awareness of the potential of tense moments of silence. Only the final deus ex machina motif is an attempt to reinstate order in a set of events connected by an inner fatality. In demanding 'majestic atmosphere' in place of 'a rather pitiful Götz-like presentation of historical fact and legend,' Nicoll is unaware that possibly a new drama is in the making.[57]

## 5. 'Popular' Serious Drama

> What determined the nature of all drama was public taste as it operated in the theatre. In the first three decades of the century the Romantic spirit dominated fiction, poetry, and the theatre; audiences sated themselves on Gothic tragedy, Gothic melodrama, and dramatizations of Scott.[58]

A certain irony consists in the partial divorce of the 'literary' English romantic drama from the popular. That a movement which aimed to 'discover what is really important to men'[59] should have isolated itself from the very milieu where 'the sympathies of men' are the most directly addressed hinges possibly on another factor, one that Wordsworth obliquely highlights: 'the man speaking to men' (W, p. 737) does not carry on a dialogue. He bases his idea of 'what is important' on the 'more than usual organic sensibility' of his own being and this in turn is to ensure 'that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified' (W, p. 735). Contradiction ensues from the evangelical approach suggested by Wordworth's statement and his concurrent view that the poet's feelings should imaginatively identify with those of his subject or at least come 'near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes,' sometimes even 'slip[ping] into an entire delusion' (W, p. 737). A carryover of eighteenth-century didacticism is evident in Wordsworth's theory, an observation supported by Rene Wellek's conclusion that the early English Romantic 'holds a position in the history of criticism which must be called ambiguous or transitional.'[60] These traces of a lingering pre-Romantic ethos are significant in the context of early English romantic closure, which only partially exhibits the dramatist's imaginative identification with his subject. By extension, this factor may indicate one of the reasons underlying the reading drama's exile from the stage. The lingering pedagogical tone of the ending does not forward intense identification between the drama and spectator, while the so-called popular Romanticism of the Gothic tragedy, melodrama, and historical play (represented by adaptations from Scott) is more content, at least after the first decade of the nineteenth century, to show rather than to tell and instruct.

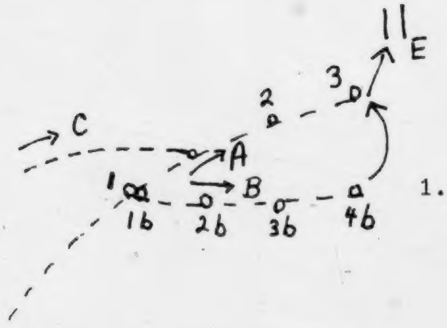
This greater absorption of the popular dramatist in his subject will be illustrated by the endings of three dramas: Isaac Pocock's The Miller and his Men (1813), Maturin's Bertram (1816), and Knowles's Virginius (1820), with illustrative references to other stage productions.

Our earlier study of closure on the popular British stage has indicated the persistence of 'transitional' elements, such as a moralistic commentary followed by a spectacle and a rousing chorus. It has been conjectured, moreover, that censorship may have contributed to the absence of provocative, socio-critical endings. The stage drama from approximately 1810 onward, however, largely abandons the didactic carry-over; while the restrictions of censorship still appear to be evident in the avoidance of 'controversial' subject-matter, closure moves in the directions left open: action persists in the form of a giant tableau-spectacle, or ceases climatically with a revelation and a resounding show of emotional response.

The now-forgotten collection of Original Dramas, not yet Acted, anonymously published by John Galt in 1814, suggests the change of attitude delineated above.[61] The dramas are, as the title suggests, aimed at the stage; what may have prompted their rejection is their markedly violent nature: The Sorceress, for instance, is a reworking of the 'Medea' Stoff, in which the mother clutches one of her children by the heels, dashing out its brains, and reappears onstage after the second murder (suggested only by a 'chop'!) bearing a bloody hatchet. His dramas, Galt maintains, are meant 'to show (my emphasis) the metaphysical peculiarities of [this] character' (I, p. 215). Subjective response, he suggests, arises from objective portrayal: 'whenever the ingenuity of passion is correctly conceived and perspicuously expressed, it will always excite sympathy' (III, p. 31). In a typological parallel to Grillparzer's later Medea, for instance, Galt's ending depicts Jason moving to strike his wife, who retires into an inner room which presently fills with fire. A sarcastic addendum reveals, moreover, the change that has taken place in melodramatic closure: 'the scene suddenly changing, may show Medea rising from the flames in a chariot drawn by dragons, if the mechanist should think such an absurdity likely to increase the effect of the sentiment' (III, p. 28). In spite of the playwright's disapproval of 'machinery,' therefore, both suggested endings yet reveal a move toward tableau and climactic structures.

Isaac Pocock's The Miller and his Men (1813) represents, according to Michael Booth, the second phase of Gothic melodrama, distinguished from the first by 'the absence of the supernatural, the replacement of the usurping tyrant by the bandit chief, the grim castle by the peasant's cottage, and a greater domesticity of characterization and sentiment.'[62] Although Booth mentions that 'sensational effects' are still present in this metamorphosis, and illustrates this with Samuel Arnold's The Woodman's Hut (1814), where 'the hero and heroine escape on a raging river lit by flashes of lightening, and the pursuing villains are trapped in a climactic forest fire'[63] he fails to remark one essential innovation: not only is the forest fire 'climactic,' but closure itself is now climactic. An interesting historical parallel arises from the 'big bang' ending of The Miller and his Men: our first illustration of this highly dynamic closural structure in the preceding chapter, Korner's Zriny (1814) depicts a similar wordless climactic tableau, and is staged only one year after its British 'parallel.'[64]

In a Bohemian setting, The Miller and his Men centers on a love intrigue: the sanctimonious heroine Claudine is in love with the exemple par excellence of middle-class outcasts, a poor man (Lothair). Her honest father desires her to marry Grindoff, a wealthy miller, but refuses to force her hand. The miller, actually a bandit in disguise, is willing to do all the necessary persuasion, to the point of abducting her to the cave where he conceals his former conquest, Ravina. Science now comes to the aid of amorous virtue: the captured Lothair and the reformed 'fallen woman,' Ravina, string a train from the cave to the mill and obtain a bottle of phosphorus. This action constitutes the first introductory motif to the ending. An additional influx of intrigue, however, effects a retardation of the outcome, and heads off a second introductory motif. Claudine's father, having discovered the pseudo-miller's true identity, rushes to the rescue of his landlord, the Count Frederick Friberg, who has also stumbled into the villain's clutches. After tearing off the miller's disguise, the old man leads an armed pursuit of the discovered bandit chief. The chase takes them to the cave, where the train lies ready to be fired. The ending represents a convergence of the two introductory motifs: the chase and the explosion. No sooner has Claudine reached safety in her lover's arms, than the mill, filled with bandits, explodes. The ending may be diagrammatically represented as follows:



A: Claudine captured - trib. motif
B: Rescue of Count
C: Preceding capture of Lothair

1: abduction of heroine
2: persuasion of Ravina to aid
1. Intro. motif: 3: train and phosphorus prepared

1b: Departure of Count
2b: pursuit of father
3b: revelation - discovery

2. Intro. motif: 4b: chase - leads to mill and explosion

Ending: explosion (e) Parallel actions of climactic —tableau ending: flight of 'good people,' destruction of bad

The dense structure of the above ending reveals a central feature of romantic melodramatic closure. Although characterization may be crude, the intrigue is indeed complex. The comparison of our earlier schema of Baroque closure (Chapter 3) with that of The Miller and his Men indicates certain affinities, such as the coexistence of tributary intrigues, and their convergence in the ending. Nevertheless, the dynamic motifs are here staggered in a sustained climax which also serves as the final situation. Simultaneity also predominates: although the chain of motifs in line A scenically precedes those in B, they are yet temporally concurrent. The ending also depicts two simultaneous final situations in a climactic tableau: the destruction of the villains and the flight of the virtuous characters. According to the prevalent melodramatic norm, therefore, the outcome is positive; at the same time, action, although resolved, does not fall into stasis.

With Bertram, or The Castle of St. Aldobrand (1816), by Charles Maturin, an Irish clergyman, the English romantic drama comes of age. While the melodrama has, on a primitive level, already brought the exotic and the fantastic to the stage, the hero Bertram represents the prototypical romantic hero - a swaggering, declamatory figure, demonic yet single-mindedly devoted to the objects of his passion, an outcast wanderer who spurns conventional society as much as it disapproves of him, goaded forth to extreme action by the 'fate' which lies within his character. By means of the romantic reversal of values, moreover, his very Satanism renders him destructively attractive. Not without some poetic merit, moreover, Bertram exemplifies the breakthrough of the poetic drama, devoid of the virtuous moralizing which is frequently a component of the melodrama and the closet play, to the popular stage.[65] Curiously, this drama by a clergyman, as Marcel Ruff observes, 'n'y oppose pas des bons et des méchants, mais seulement des hommes que leur destin a entrainés vers le bien ou vers le mal.'[66] What shocked the London audiences, however, was the clearly-indicated adultery of Imogen and the hero, to the degree that by 1819 the drama was no longer performed.[67]

With his habitual incisiveness, Hazlitt focuses on the innovative or romantic elements of Bertram, although, at the same time, he judges it by the norms of the conventional drama. 'Its beauties,' he states, 'are rather those of language and sentiment than of action or situation' ('Review,' The Examiner, May 19, 1816; VIII, p. 304). In the last act, the plot is 'known and inevitable,' and 'the trick of introducing the little child twice to untie the knot of the catastrophe,' he complains, is one 'fantoccini exhibition' too many (VII, p. 304). Referring to

Aristotle's definition of tragedy as 'a serious action,' he notes that there is here neither cause nor effect, and no action. 'There is a want of that necessary connection between what happens, what is said, and what is done, in which we take the essence of dramatic invention to consist. It is a sentimental drama, it is a romantic drama, but it is not a tragedy, in the best sense of the word ' (VIII, p. 305).

Hazlitt's commentary suggests that the practice of the romantic drama in England is now several steps ahead of theory, a general symptom, possibly, of a vicious circle in the European romantic drama, where theory either outstrips practice or fails to recognize the novel aspects of its own achievements. Although Wordsworth's reaction to Bertram can well be imagined, his statement in the 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads' throws light upon a factor Hazlitt undervalues: 'the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling' (W, p. 735). Not only has the dramatist's view of action radically changed in the European romantic drama, but also, the sense of the ending reflects the larger aesthetic shift. Contrary to Hazlitt's contention, moreover, the outcome of Bertram is not static, but packed with gesture and action as well as extravagantly-expressed emotion.

The ending of Bertram, as Hazlitt observes, represents no 'untying' of the intrigue. Rather, it develops in a set of wave-like repercussions leading from Bertram's central transgression, the slaying of his mistress's husband. This action is, in turn, a reaction to Imogen's spurning of her lover in the guilt resulting from their adultery. As she confesses to her servant:

We met in madness, and in guilt we parted.
Oh! I see horror rushing to thy face![68]

Spitting forth fury, Bertram arrives at the castle with his pirate-band to accomplish his vengeance, brushing aside Imogen's pleas:

Thou fairest flower!
Why didst thou fling thyself across my path?
My tiger spring must crush thee in its way,
But cannot pause to pity thee. (Dicks III, [IV, i] p. 681)

The deed accomplished, a graphic series of screams announces each stage of the ending. While Bertram sits 'in dread society' with the corpse of the slain husband, Imogen flees to the neighboring priory, where she interrupts the prayers of the monks with her shrieks. (In an illustration, intentional or not, of ecclesiastic misogyny, the Prior chides Imogen as a 'wretch,' but addresses Bertram as 'a struggling beam that dazzles, awes and vanishes' [Dicks III, [V, i] p. 683]!) Scenes of madness and rhetoric finally give way to the heroine's death in Bertram's arms, and her reproachful last words, 'Have I deserved this of thee?' (III, p. 685) This paves the way for Bertram's final grand swagger before the admiring audience of monks:

I killed her, but I loved her.
What arm shall loose the grasp of love and death? (V, iii, p. 685)

Criminal, judge and executioner all in one, he refuses to recognize any foe save himself: 'Bertram hath but one fatal foe on earth,/And he is here!' Fittingly, he sings hiw own eulogy in a climactic 'burst of wild exultation' after he stabs himself:

I died no felon's death;
A warrior's weapon freed a warrior's soul!

Once the popular drama has shaken off its relatively reserved earlier approach to closure, no lengths are too extreme for the sake of evoking effect. James Sheridan Knowles's Virginius (1820), for instance, received 'long-continued cheers . . . half stifled screams and involuntary ejaculations.'[69] In the ending of Virginius, action is only significant because it provokes reaction. A comparison of the final situation of Lessing's Emilia Galotti, also based upon the 'Virginius' Stoff, and that of Knowles's drama reveals that the closing tone of the eighteenth-century play is far calmer. The focus is less on grief than on the paradoxical conversion of crime into a virtue, and on the contrast between heavenly and earthly 'justice.' Unlike the relatively self-possessed Galotti, the father-murderer of Knowles's drama is in a state of shock. A peculiar form of treatment brings him back to the awareness of reality: the urn containing the ashes of his daughter is placed in his hand. To his question, 'What is this?' he is told: 'Virginia!' (p. 147). With this answer, the floodgates of grief spring open, and the drama concludes abruptly with a tableau of the father and his daughter's fiancé clinging to each other and weeping. The curtain thus falls on an outburst of emotion.

## 6. The Second Generation of Poet-Dramatists: Closure on the Stage and in the Text

Only three years separate Remorse (1813) from Byron's Manfred (wr. 1816-17; pr. 1817); the time lapse is actually, considering the date of the former's composition as Osorio (1797) much greater. With the development of closural structures on the popular romantic stage, clearly-marked if not subtle forerunners already exist for Byron, Keats and Shelley. At the same time, the exaggerated trail of horrors in dramas such as Bertram and the mechanical tricks of the melodramatic ending have accomplished changes in structure and content but have done little for the depth or complexity of the text, beyond creating sustained tension and overpowering tableaux. The provocative existential questions, the propensity to seize at equivocal elements and to probe the ambiguities of character and action which characterize the closure of such dramatists as Kleist and Grillparzer in German Romanticism are to this point largely absent in the English movement. Rather, affinities exist with the superficial spectacles already outlined in our previous chapter in the dramas of Werner and Körner; the other-worldly Schwärmerei of a Werner is, however, also notably absent in the far more moderate religious aspects of English Romanticism. In Bertram, for instance, the monastery and its resident monks are merely Gothic trappings, vehicles of moralistic judgement, and a means of supplying an admiring but shocked chorus of spectators for the hero's personal dramatic displays. Had Werner handled Maturin's plot, it may be conjectured, meteors would have blazed heavenward from the ascending spirits of the dead Bertram and Imogen, to the accompaniment of a procession and the monks' harps, trumpets and hymns.

The double-edged attitude of Byron, Keats and Shelley to the stage, their contempt mixed with a desire to penetrate it, can well be understood in the context of British nineteenth-century theatre. Popular culture had taken over the spectacular, emotional components of Romanticism and its precursors, the Gothic mode and sentimentalism, and had, in subgenres such as the nautical and equestrian melodrama, combined them with the nationlism, conservative political principles and *Biedermeier*-like sympathy for the 'honest *Bürger*' which constituted the widespread *Weltanschauung* of the age. Spectacle had, with innovations like the water-tank stage at Sadler's Wells Theatre and the equestrian arena at Astley's, turned the drama into a giant picture aiming to transport the naive, imaginatively-starved spectator beyond the squalor of an increasingly industrialized age.[70]

The 'Bryonic paradox' is thus not only an expression of the writer's habitual desire to *épater le bourgeois*, but equally a reaction to theatrical conditions:

> On the one hand, he venerated the stage, delighted in seeing his own thinly-veiled figure prancing before the curtain . . . [on the other] he denounced the popular drama, the management, the audience--'the publican *boxers*,' 'the degradation of our vaunted stage!'--'Oh! motley sight!' Condemning the theatre, he served it as a member of the Drury Lane Subcommittee; claiming 'aloofness' from the stage, he attempted to reform it.[71]

As a dramaturgist Byron's attitude was equally paradoxical. 'Claiming a neoclassic theory, he authored one of the most modern plays in the period; reverencing the classic form, he demonstrated it incompatibility with modern subjective matter.'[72]

An amusing instance of the frustration of the critic who tries to fit the Byronic drama in the strait-jacket of Freytag's pyramid is illustrated by Samuel Chew, in what remains, in spite of its age, one of the most extensive treatments of Byron's dramatic endeavours.[73] As Chew remarks, the dramas virtually begin with the ending: 'Readers are asked to interest themselves in the final stages of the fortunes of people with whom they have had no previous acquaintance.'[74] Considering 'exposition,' 'climax' and 'catastrophe' in turn, Chew concludes: 'This review of Bryon's general constructive abilities in the drama has shown how faulty his technique was.'[75] The pyramidic representation of Cain (1821) Werner (pr. 1823, perf. 1830) he finds impossible; Heaven and Earth (pr. 1822, rpt. 1824) and The Deformed Transformed (pr. 1824) are merely 'upward-slanting lines,' and the fifth act of Marino Faliero (wr. 1820; perf. pr. [expurgated] 1821) is 'merely an undramatic aftermath;' for Sardanapalus (pr. 1821; perf. 1834) the schema of Freytag fits, to the approval of Chew, while The Two Foscari (pr. 1821; perf. 1834) and Manfred (wr. 1816, pr. 1817, perf. 1834) hardly realize the potentials of dramatic structure!'[76] Once more, the desire to dictate dramatic form according to preconceived standards leads to a rejection or lack of awareness of what the text tries to accomplish.

In the opening lines of Manfred, the hero states:

> The lamp must be replenish'd, but even then
> It will not burn so long as I must watch:
> My slumbers--if I slumber--are not sleep,
> But a continuance of enduring thought,
> . . .
> . . . and yet I live, and bear
> The aspect and the form of breathing men.[77]

The development of conflict is thus from the beginning negated: the protagonist's spiritual state is already that of a romantic 'death in life,' and the movement of the dramatic poem is directed toward the final stage of a process which leads to death. Manfred represents a vigil.

Had Goethe not, with the second part of Faust, converted the drama into a tale of redemption--however ambiguously this may nevertheless finally emerge--Manfred could have served as a typological aftermath for Faust I, wherein the hero, blackened by his own corrosive striving and haunted by his unhappy consciousness, spills forth his suffering, guilt, and unweakened defiance to a cosmos filled with supernatural beings that are aspects and projections of his mind. To separate, therefore, an exciting force and a climax from the succession of collage-components in Manfred contradicts the form and content of the drama. It is a series of episodic sketches, stations in a death-Odyssey; the development also resembles a set of concentric circles, and in the drama's movement from the outer to the innermost, death is increasingly iminent. Similarly, all actions, such as the Chamois Hunter's rescue of Manfred from suicide, are directed toward the hero's self-revelation, which is also the revelation of his self-willed death. Conflict consists merely in the repeated protestations of a stubborn will against the resumption of social ties and the norms of human life. The stages of Manfred's progression toward death are given a mythical and folkloristic quality by their three-fold division: while Act I closes climactically with the hero's averted suicide, the approach of death is heralded at the end of the second act in Astarte's cry of 'Manfred! Tomorrow ends thy earthly ills. Farewell!' (p. 401), and, at the close of the third act, death itself.

The conflict, sustained and repeated at a constant level, is generated within the character. Unlike Faust, whose inner quest for knowledge takes on external manifestations in his movement through various levels of natural and supernatural life but centres on human relationship, the rebellious ego in Manfred remains the sole motivating force. The responsibility for Manfred's past actions, moreover, rests totally within him. He has signed no pact with Mephistopheles; hence he freely rejects both the human and the transcendent order.

One essential modifying factor, however, causes the ending to go beyond a gesture of total denial or nihilism:

> But Manfred does not rest in mere negation; in spite of failure he refuses to abandon the right to know . . . . [The] problem, What is beyond? remains as absorbing as ever.[78]

For this reason, the outcome resembles a series of questions.

The ending of Manfred, like that of the German episodic drama which consists chiefly of a series of psychological-emotional stages (e.g. Hölderlin's Empedokles, Tieck's Genoveva, and Büchner's Dantons Tod) evolves from a set of thematic clusters. The final stage is formed by the encounter between the Abbot and the hero and complicated by the apparition of the extra-terrestrial spirit. It represents the last efforts of both the 'normal,' integrated world and the 'abnormal,' supernatural world to subjugate the hero's will. Two poles of tension thus exist on either side of Manfred: society and its norms and the yet unplumbed cosmos. Significantly, both are rejected, but not entirely without wavering.

The final fragment begins in peace. When the Abbot arrives to request a meeting with Manfred, the hero, alone in his tower, looks out upon the stars, moon and mountain-tops, all of which have taught him 'the language of another world' (p. 404). Unlike Empedokles in Hölderlin's fragments, he does not view himself, however, as a prophet of humanity because of this superior power. The ego has, in one direction, shrunk within itself; in another, it has expanded beyond the mere 'gods' of immediate metaphysical conflict to wander through history. In Manfred's meditation, the transience of time contrasts with the timelessness of nature, and in a moment privilegié his spirit fuses 'with silent worship of the great of old' (p. 405). Already at the end of his monologue, nevertheless, the sense of unity begins to waver, for 'our thoughts take wildest flight/Even at the moment they should array/Themselves in pensive order.' The disruptive factor is not the 'other' but the self.' As if to reinforce this loss of harmony, the Abbot enters, and the tone shifts from peace to conflict and threat.

Abruptly in the course of this transition, nature also reveals her dark side. A vision materializes from the vast cosmos to bring Manfred a summons to depart from mortal life. Here the stubbornness of the Byronic hero shines. To draw upon a ludicrous parallel, Manfred resembles a child who, all the time he is being borne off to bed, cries, 'No! I won't go with you!' In poetic terms, his answer is:

> I knew, and know my hour is come, but not
> To render up my soul to such as thee:
> Away! I'll die as I have lived--alone. (p. 405 [III, iv])

Ironically, however, death immediately follows the appearance of the spirit. 'I feel my soul/Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye' (p. 406). A Faust who has signed no pact, he protests that his strength comes from his own superiority. Heaven has no ability to punish his crimes, for the mind 'is its own origin of ill and end.' Death, is on one level the only force against which he does not protest, on another, a 'closure' contained within himself.

The conflict with the Demon-spirit over, it is now the Abbot's turn to be repulsed. To the demands of the priest that he should pray, the hero cries, 'Tis over--my dull eyes can fix thee not.' The spiritual norms of conventional religion are as false to him as the demands of the supernatural.

At this point, one of the major ambiguities of the ending is posed in a brief request of only four words: 'Give me thy hand.'[79] In the midst of Manfred's rebellion, when he has created a tabula rasa around him, he yet wavers and asks for a human hand. A significant question results from this sudden wish: Is the 'mystery' of Manfred in part a tragedy of solitude which secretly craves human companionship? The suggestion is, however, dropped as soon as it is articulated. To the Abbot's final reproach, 'Cold--cold--even to the heart--/But yet one prayer,' a last burst of defiance is voiced in a parting super-human swagger: 'Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.' At this point, the ending fades away into a question voiced by the Abbott: 'Whither? I dread to think--but he is gone.'

The outcome of Manfred thus represents not only the final wanderings in a death-Odyssey--which paradoxically forms the circular journey of heaven, earth, and time around a stationary hero--but also, once the 'end-station' has been reached, the doors fly open to a new and equally mysterious Odyssey beyond death: 'Whither?' The 'mystery' leads to a new mystery, and the 'quest' remains a question.

In the forward-motion of this ending which paradoxically becomes a non-ending, a climactic structure is implicit; in the movement back into still unresolved uncertainties, a circular; in the hero's sudden wavering in the face of the one goal he does not deny, i.e. death, to seize a human hand, ironic reversal emerges; and, in the shifting of time, space, heaven, earth, defiance, exaltation, a collage structure lies at the base. With Manfred, English romantic closure achieves its widest diversity of structures.

The staging of Manfred in 1834, years after the poet's death, only reinforces the split between the aims of the romantic drama and the demands of production. The work was converted into a 'witch drama,' complete with the elaborate scenic trappings of the Victorian stage, and closed with the headlong rush of Manfred into the arms of a celestial Astarte. As Margaret Howell's recent study summarizes, 'All ended splendidly in a passionate flight of thunder-bolts, a tremendous storm, and falling rocks revealing the palace of Arimanes in the background.'[80] Climactic action and a tableau converge in the popular stage presentation.

Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice is couched in an outwardly more conventional form than Manfred. In a tightly-linked chain of events, impulse and consequence are so interconnected as to crush the believer in free will. As Samuel Chew observes in his study of Byron's dramas, 'resistance to arbitrary power [is] prompted by belief in spiritual liberty . . . . Through voluntary action, or action that the hero supposes voluntary, he is placed in opposition to the Whole.'[81] Byron's focus upon a single protagonist, and his adherence to the unities of time and action cast his play into a traditional mold. Other features, however, characterize the drama as 'romantic.' Passion predominates to the degree that character becomes its mere voicing. Motivation remains as complex as the passions that direct it. As a result, Marino Faliero appears to move from a catalytic event, the hero's sense of betrayal when Venetian justice does not thoroughly avenge a slight to his wife. As in Kleist's novella Michael Kohlhaas (1809), the consequences of a seemingly minor 'exciting force' are immense.

The development culminates in the Doge's betrayal of the government he himself heads, and his trial and condemnation. Unresolved and antithetical elements linger, however, in spite of the outwardly conclusive outcome. The drama continues to pose questions in the mind of the reader or spectator: whether, for instance, a single-minded devotion to political reform can stem from wounded personal pride; whether egotistical concerns do not inevitably cause the failure of revolution in a form of inward crumbling; and whether a populist movement can ever surmount public apathy and personal self-seeking. This presence of ambiguous voices caused one contemporary reviewer to characterize the subject of the drama as 'an animal with two heads.'[82]

The ending of Marino Faliero reflects the themes and structure of the drama as a whole. More 'conventional' in its form, however, than Manfred, the drama leads the intrigue to an introductory motif: the trial of Marino. A series of tableaux, however, transforms the ending, commencing with the sentencing of the hero, from a mere winding-down of action into a prophetic but ambiguous scène clef which recasts the drama into new significance and complexity.

In one sense, Marino Faliero's tragic mistake has already been committed before the represented time of the drama. A distinguished military leader, he has accepted from afar an invitation to fill the position of Doge of Venice, unaware that the ruling Council of Ten has curtailed the powers of the office; whether this justifies his counteraction or his trial by his peers is not convincingly resolved. His statement, moreover, that a sense of 'private wrong' has led him to an awareness of 'public vices' (II, iii, p. 429) appears to be a rationalization. In thought and action, he remains a patrician.

In spite of his final air of conviction and his thundering indictments of political corruption in the course of his trial, his remark that 'the truth is in abeyance' (p. 445) applies not only to his jury's distortion of justice but also to the split in his own motivation. The reasoned impartiality of his wife represents an intellectual truth: 'Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,/Half cancelled by the harshness of these men' (p. 447).

The conflict-filled ending which follows the passing of sentence has thus been prepared; even as the Chief of the Council condemns Marino to death, the question of the ending is indirectly posed:

> Time must reply to that; our sons will judge
> Their fathers' judgment, which I now pronounce (V, i, p. 448).

With this preparation, the final situation unfolds in a three-part progression. First, the farewell of husband and wife takes place, an episode which recalls conventional practice through its tone of harmony, ended by the first tableau of the ending, that of Angiolina sinking into unconsciousness. This stereotyped depiction of the romantic female gives way to a powerful pair of closing scenes, the first of which opens with a tableau composed of significant actions and stances. In an ironic reversal of the Doge's induction, the Council and other patricians await Marino at the top of the 'Giants' Staircase' in the Ducal Palace. Circularity emerges from this setting, whereby the execution is both the reflection and the inverse of the Doge's ascent to his title. With the Executioner overlooking the scene, the ironic pantomime of coronation continues as the Doge's ducal cap is removed. Dialogue now replaces gesture. Stripped of the trappings of his title, Faliero asserts, he has regained his identity. Two suggestions underlie both this statement and the preceding tableau: first, that the execution is the true coronation in the eyes of future generations, and second, that the title which has rendered Faliero a partial outsider in a populist movement is, in face of the 'democratization' of death, dissolved. In a commentary on his own history, the protagonist draws out the 'unerhörte Begebenheit' at the heart of the drama: he and Agis, King of Sparta, are the only crowned rulers in history who have joined a popular cause to overthrow the system they themselves represent. From this singling-out of the unique situation, Marino launches into what constitutes the prophetic pinnacle of the drama. A long monologue ensues, which in spite of its dramatic form, sustains the rhetoric of a romantic ode. Imagery and rhetoric do not function as mere decorative devices, but become the propelling forces of an apocalyptic vision. History is represented as an unending process of decadence. Desolation and oblivion will swallow Venice. In a climactic outburst of wrath, Marino predicts:

> Then, in the last gasp of thine agony
> Amidst thy many murders, think of mine!
> Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes!
> Gehenna of the waters! Thou sea-Sodom!
> Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods!
> Thee and thy serpent seed! (V, iii, p. 452)

Abruptly, however, his words cease on this climax of malediction, and a tableau, that of the Executioner's sword raised over the Doge's head, terminates the scene on a pinnacle of action.

With the closing scene, collage and tableau structures are combined as once more the theme and perspective shift. The scene's opening tableau represents a crowd of commoners thronging about the locked gates of the palace--a detail which reinforces the themes of social segregation and the futility of action. Wisps of conversation are heard, combining a lust for spectacle with genuine sympathy for the hero. Syntax ironically focuses upon the ineptitude of the popular movement for reform: 'would we had known . . . we would have brought weapons.' (V, iv, pp. 452-3).

Already in the minds of the spectators, Marino's execution is an event; whether the epiphanic symbol of his death will surpass that of a mere spectacle is a question that the final tableau obliquely poses. First appears the Chief of the Ten, waving a bloody sword in the name of justice to traitors. This is followed by a mass tableau, as the crowd rushes in to the scene of the execution. A one-line comment, 'The gory head rolls down the Giant's steps' may symbolize Marino's future significance in history as an inspiration for reform; on the other, humanity swarms about the spectacle without purpose, divided from without and within, and Faliero's nightmarish prophecy of foreboding has only been heard by enemies.

In Marino Faliero, the ending shifts from one setting to another in collage fragments; a climactic prophecy is succeeded by a tableau of the hero poised to await the stroke of the axe; and the mass tableau reflects disorder and lack of resolution. The ending of Byron's drama set in a remote period of Italian history is as despairing as Büchner's portrayal of a manmade hell in the chaos of the French Revolution.

Manfred and Marino Faliero represent two dramatic forms in the work of Byron: the first, the 'dramatic poem,' allied in content with the mystery play, and the second, the pseudo-Neoclassical tragedy, where the unities of time and action, if not of place, are carefully observed. Byron's later dramatic works fall into one or the other of the two forms represented by Marino Faliero and Manfred. Sardanapalus and The Two Foscari, both published in 1821, were later appropriated by theatre directors: the former in 1834, and the latter in 1837. Both dramas, like Marino, deal with the problems of the individual in the state. In The Two Foscari, Byron's second Venetian play, three poles of tension are represented: the fanatical devotion to the state, exemplified by Foscari and his son Jacopo; the corrupt but absolute power of the Council of Ten, headed by Foscari's implacable enemy, Loredano; and the larger humanist values embodied in Marina Foscari, who maintains that liberty is not a matter of tenacious adherence to a political principle or to a state but centered in the mind:

> Marina. Thy life is safe.
> Jacopo. And liberty?
> Marina. The mind should make its own. (p. 505)

These tensions are not resolved in the ending; rather, the selfless patriot Foscari, having condemned, Brutus-like, his own son for a political indiscretion, is himself ousted. As he prepares to vacate the Ducal Palace ('I entered here/As sovereign--I go out as citizen' [p. 519]) he drinks poison proffered by his enemy Loredano. In an ironic echo of Shakespearean closure, the Council, shocked but not outraged at the Councillor's brazen action, determines to give the dead man funeral rites as befit his 'rank and his devotion' (p. 519). At Marina's protest that this is a mockery, the fathers of the state are inveterate. Graciously, however, they attribute her words to 'her circumstances' (p. 520), bereaved of husband and father-in-law. The final ironic *pointe* occurs when Loredano, asked what he is writing, replies 'That *he* has paid me!' pointing to the body of the Doge. In short, personal vengeance has been accomplished with the aid of political power. The ironic reversal of the ending, again, as in *Marino Faliero*, dangles forth a series of questions: to what purpose is patriotic devotion? Does the mind create its own liberty, and is this the only freedom to be achieved in the face of power? Contrary to the contention of Chew, who claims that the drama puts forth 'the great Byronic theme of intellectual freedom,'[83] a vast distance now separates romantic closure from the facile idealism of *Remorse*, where the ending extolls the ability of contraries to achieve harmony.

*Sardanapalus*, another attempt to 'preserve,' or at least to 'approach' ('Preface,' p. 453) the unities, ends climactically with the 'romantic calisthenics' (or the 'long jump?') that are later to be immortalized in Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (1877). Together the disillusioned and defeated monarch Sardanapalus and his lover, the slave-woman Myrrha, leap into a blazing funeral pyre. This final action stems, however, from determinism, from Sardanapalus's fatalistic belief that he is 'the slave of circumstance/ . . . /Misplaced upon the throne, misplaced in life' (p. 482). Concurrently, the curtain falls on a dynamic tableau, that of the final leap.

That Byron was, at the time of Sardanapalus's composition, reading Grillparzer suggests a possible influence, for his earlier dramas do not close on a similar note of intense action.[84]

Byron's last completed drama, Werner: or, The Inheritance (wr. 1821, pr. 1822, perf. 1830) has received little praise. As Howell summarizes, 'Despite the Gothic cliché - the ruined castle, erring nobles, strange crime, paternal anguish, secret passage, innocent maiden and anti-hero - Werner is tedious in the extreme.'[85] In spite of this--or perhaps because of it--the play had a stage life of fifty-nine years. A convincing attempt is, however, made by T.H. Vail Motter to argue its worth, and his point that critics 'have attempted to appraise Byron's play as poetry, as tragedy, as literary art, when in reality it is none of these things'[86] could well be applied to many 'condemned' romantic dramas. Werner is indeed a stage play, or more accurately, a Gothic melodrama, as Vail Motter observes.[87] The present study ventures to suggest a further modification: in form and content, a marked affinity to German Sturm und Drang dramas emerges. The ending, in particular, which depicts the final break between father and son, and concludes with the father's wail, 'The race of Siegendorf is past!' (p. 605) calls to mind Klinger's Zwillinge and Leisewitz's Julius von Tarent in its unmitigated anguish.

Paralleling the theme and, in part, the form of Manfred, both Byron's Cain (pr. 1821) and Heaven and Earth (wr. 1821; pr. 1822) are mysteries. Otten comments that, while 'his historical plays mirror, in their structure at least, the geometric design of traditional drama'--an assertion that even the aged study of Chew disproves, and which the present examination also attempts to contradict with respect to closure--the mysteries are 'far more experimental in both form and matter.'[88] The term 'mystery' Byron adopts in conformity with the scriptural content of the medieval 'mystery' or 'morality' ('Preface' to _Cain_, p. 520). What _Cain_ presents, however, is an 'anti-morality.' The judgement of God, as Otten incisively notes, is irrelevant to the hero; similarly, 'the question is not when will the hero reach the moral end, the Idea, but how he is to discover it at all.'[89]

> Unable ro repent yet unable to escape from his offense, Cain is an archetype of modern man, alienated from God, yet dissatisfied with self. Moving in a wasteland without value or meaning, . . . he is the new Adam after which none will come.[90]

Virtually devoid of action, the ending of _Cain_ develops in a linear progression the external and internal repercussions of his _act gratuit_. He symbolizes, in the final situation of the 'mystery,' a new Everyman (or 'Popeye'?): cursed with the fate of his own nature ('That which I am, I am' [p. 544]), and doomed to give birth to a race who resembles him, now that he has 'dried the fountain of a gentle race' (p. 545), his journey into the blighted wilderness also represents man's future unending journey. In this sense, an ongoing world-tragedy forms the circularity of the final situation.

Almost as a sequel to the ending of Cain, _Heaven and Earth_ closes climactically with the devastation of the Great Flood:

> The waters rise; Men fly in every direction . . . Japhet remains upon a rock, while the Ark floats toward him in the distance (p. 559).

This supposedly positive resolution--the salvation of a 'chosen one' in the midst of disaster--is, however, merely an affirmation of the undifferentiated workings of fate. Unlike Manfred, who is at least able to delude himself that he can control his destiny, Japhet is bound to an existence he considers worse than death:

> To die! in youth to die!
> And happier in that doom,
> Than to behold the universal tomb,
>         Which I
> Am thus condemn'd to weep above in vain.
> Why, when all perish, why must I remain? (p. 559)

With this climactic outburst of protest and grief, and the succeeding tableau of chaos, the ending of this drama also suggests, like Cain, an on-going cycle of doomed existence. Fate, moreover, no longer lies within the hero, as in earlier Romanticism, but has been transformed into a crushing external force. With this progression from the sustained rebellion and unconquered will of Manfred to the voicing of a fatalist view of the individual in the confines of an existential cycle of doom, Byron strikes a note of affinity with the ethos expressed in the closure of Grabbe and Büchner. Concurrently, he foreshadows the tone of metaphysical despair later to emerge from Beddoes' Death's Jest-Book.

With Byron, the Romantic age in England had seen an anomaly, a poet-dramatist whose works had attained some popular success on the stage. The terms of this dramatic reputation were nevertheless lodged in partial failure, for the adaption undergone by his dramas to conform with theatrical practice involved, as our foregoing reference to the ending of the stage version of Manfred has already indicated, a major trivialization. An overview of Byron's closure in his dramatic texts reveals, however, that the ending can indeed become a vehicle for expressing an ethos with contrarities, tensions and unresolved ontological problems, in contrast with the popular forms of closure, where sensation, ongoing action, surprise reversals and high-pitched emotion are the constituent elements. Both popular and 'literary' closure are yet manifestations of the romantic spirit.

The 'sense of the ending' in the dramas of Byron is still, as on the popular stage, allied with a set of self-conscious poses calculated to terminate the drama with *éclat*. Keats's youthful experiment *Otho the Great* (wr. 1819; pr. 1883) also contrives at a similar effect; here, however, the words are fraught with irony. As the curtain falls--and the curtain fell for the first time on *Otho* well over a century after its composition[90]--the hero Ludolph has been 'gulled and cheated' by his *femme fatale* enchantress.[91] Maddened by affliction, he attempts to murder his beloved, only to find her already dead; and then, in an illustration of Byron's contention voiced through Manfred 'how easy 'tis to die,' he staggers into the arms of his attendants:

> She's gone! I am content--Nobles, good night!
> We are all weary--faint--set ope the doors--
> I will to bed!--Tomorrow--
> where is your hand--father, what sultry air! (p. 379)

With these words, the drama terminates to confusion. Although the structure is climactic, in the sense that the final dynamic motif occurs abruptly and ends the play, and the closing speech composed of broken phrases and frequent breaks halting with emotion, it operates by understatement. Death is viewed as a 'long sleep' and 'tomorrow' is an illusion. The focus remains, as in Manfred or Bertram, upon the hero and his emotions. The prospect of either a heavenly or worldly harmony is not considered in the halting despair of the ending. In this way, Keats, while bound to Shakespeare in the conception of this blending of Elizabethan tragedy with Gothic melodrama, is yet far from his idolized model. Otho the Great confirms that when a single character lies at the core of romantic drama, and no larger social or religious context is significant as a symbol of the writer's sense of belonging in a larger community, the structures and functions of closure are accordingly adapted. While the words 'What sultry air!' may refer to the predominant atmosphere of the world of the drama as well as to the constrictive aspects of defeat in death, they yet portray the subjective response of a single character.

The same year as Keats completed his drama of an unrepentant hero dying in the shambles of deluded love and a kingdom of lust and manipulation, Shelley also created his drama which denies all preconceptions of good and evil. In the major critical treatment of The Cenci (wr. 1819; pr. 1820; perf. 1886), Stuart Curran stresses the unconventional aspects of the drama against the background of English Romanticism, and the originality bound in with the ending:

> The repentance that sweetens the resolution of Fazio and Remorse finds no outlet in Shelley's starkly unrepentant play. Cenci's last act is a curse; Orsino escapes without punishment, and

> Beatrice dies defying the justice of her world. The traditional horrors of the Romantic stage inhabited a comfortable Gothic land of fantasy, far removed from the terrifying nightmare of the Palazzo Cenci and the landscape of hell. The terror of The Cenci allows no retreat. Nor does the passion reduce to sentimentality . . . And such melodramatic villains as Wordsworth's Oswald, Keats's Conrad, or Coleridge's Osorio thud like Cambises across the stage, juvenile offenders next to the incarnate devil whom Shelley created.[92]

The above assessment is somewhat unjust in its view that the English romantic drama is predominantly sentimental: Maturin, Byron, and Keats carefully avoid all tones of moral condemnation and repentance, and if the villain of The Borderers, with his prosaic philosophizing, is to be viewed as 'melodramatic,' then what is Cenci with his ''Tis an awful thing/To touch upon such mischief as I now conceive'? [II, i, p. 291]). Nevertheless, Curran touches upon a central aspect of Shelley's creation in The Cenci. Here English Romanticism goes beyond a Gothic fascination with 'evil' as the counterpole of 'good' and imaginatively grows into its subject, demonstrating that, in the dense network of human motivation and response, the concepts are virtually undifferentiated.

If a conventional commentary softens or moralizes the amoral universe of The Cenci, it exists in the authorial preface:

> Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous mistakes is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love . . . If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been the tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic

> purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them.
> ('Preface,' p. 276)

Here, possibly, Shelley reveals a great naïveté regarding the popular stage; in the pre-Victorian era, moral purpose is indeed central to the melodrama and, in the absence of moralistic verbal tags, a black-and-white distinction separates the actions of the good from the bad. The avantgarde literary drama tends, rather, to defy these arbitrary delineations. His Cenci, is, moreover, too deeply-dyed in vice to evoke the shocked thrill of vicarious pleasure that welcomes the Byronic hero.

Nevertheless, the concept of the drama voiced in his preface sets up referential links with his treatment of closure.

> This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events . . . . There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart . . . the knowledge of itself . . . . If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them.
> ('Preface,' p. 276)

By implication, his drama is not intended for the contemporary stage by virtue of the dramatic ideal it incorporates; and this ideal, paradoxically, lies in the expression of no judgemental ideal.

Outwardly, The Cenci develops from an initial to a final situation. Its plot may be summarized in few words: a tyrant father abuses his entire family and eventually rapes his daughter, who, infuriated by the action, has him murdered and is herself, along with her immediate family and hired assassins, condemned to death by the Papal court. Following this outline, the murder of the father represents the 'climax,' and the sentencing and impending execution, the 'ending.'

The structure is, however, more complicated than the recounting of its events would suggest. Two consecutive stages of conflict are depicted: the first, between father and daughter, or, in its extended dimensions, the father against the Papal forces and against his immediate family; the second, between the family, headed by the daughter, and societal judgement, represented by the Papal court. An additional level of conflict in the second stage takes place within the psyche of the heroine. Viewed thematically, the form of the drama is episodic, and the double rise of conflict resembles that of Orestes. Although the second stage is a direct consequence of the first and flows together with it immediately after the death of Cenci, two 'endings' nevertheless emerge, marking the transition from one conflict to another.

The first 'ending,' that of Act IV, Scene III, is blatantly ironic. It marks the final stage of the metamorphosis predicted by Cenci in the opening scene of the same act:

> . . . No, 'tis her stubborn will
> Which by its own consent shall stop as low
> As that which drags it down. (IV, i, p. 308).

Beatrice has, in instigating and carrying out the murder of Cenci, been transformed into an embodiment of violent determination, and finally, her aim accomplished, reveals herself strangely unconcerned:

> Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;
> I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:
> The spirit which doth reign within these limbs
> Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep
> Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past.
> (IV, iii, p. 315)

Curiously, the violent act has been a form of self-affirmation, making her 'as universal as the light' (IV, ib, p. 317). Having gone beyond established morality, she also believes herself beyond the consequences of her deed--a direct mirroring of Cenci.

The fifth act, by revealing the consequences of the fourth, serves ironically to undo the confidence previously voiced by Beatrice. At the same time, it reveals to her that, contrary to her earlier delusions, the spirit of Cenci is not dead, but lives within the tyranny of the world order:

> Even though dead
> Did not his spirit live in all that breathe,
> And work for me and mine still the same ruin,
> Scorn, pain, despair? (V, iv, p. 332)

The central tone of the ending lies in the words 'if there should be . . .? (V, iv, p. 332). More subtly than that of Byron's Manfred, it also hovers in uncertainties. A collage-cluster of scenes, events, and actions which follow the patricide, the ending yet has a centre in the mind and thoughts of Beatrice; she, however, is unable to view them as a cohesive whole. To her daughter's confused raving of 'Whither, whither?,' for instance, her mother pleads trust in the love of God. Beatrice's reply is equivocal: on the one hand, 'How tedious, false and cold seem all things;' on the other, she voices a tentative affirmation: 'I hope I do trust in Him . . . And yet my heart is cold' (V, iv, p. 332).

The swivelling irony of the ending is evident even in her final words to Bernardo. She has, she claims, lived true to her faith, 'holy and unstained' (V, iv, p. 334). Her foregoing words throughout the scene have, however, expressed a lack of faith. In her hope, moreover, that her brother should 'die as I do: fear and pain/Being subdued,' irony is also inherent. Her outward calm is, perhaps, merely an expression of her gigantic will, and the prospect of a fearless, painless death is rendered bleak in spite of Beatrice's seemingly reconciled bearing.

Irony achieves a new level of bitterness in Beatrice's final words: her farewell to the 'dear Cardinal,' a former ally of her father; and the naturalistic reference to binding her hair- a reflection, possibly, of the hair which has tumbled chaotically about her shoulders after her father's attack (III, i, p. 296). The final reinforcement of ironic mockery comes with the statement: 'Well, 'tis very well.' Nothing, in fact, is 'well.' The apparent reconciliation on the surface level of her words merely serves to accomplish the ironic reversal of the ending. Beatrice's final 'well' is, like the final 'gut' of Kleist's Penthesilea, a grim expression of defeat.

The 'lyrical drama,' Prometheus Unbound (wr. 1818-19; pr. 1820), appears on the surface level to contradict the existential vision stemming from The Cenci. The protagonist of the later work represents 'the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and truest motives to the best and noblest ends' (Preface, p. 205). Shelley also states that, in departing from Aeschylus, he has averted a 'catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion [i.e. Prometheus] with the Opressor [Jupiter] of mankind' (p. 205). When these statements, moreover, are joined with the themes of 'Life, Joy, Empire and Victory' in the closing verse of the lyrical drama, a glowing prophetic vision seems to emerge.

This is, however, contradicted by deeper levels of imagery and symbolism. The conflict between Prometheus and Jupiter is, already in the Preface, presented as an ongoing one: 'The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the suffering and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his *successful and perfidious* adversary (my emphasis; p. 203). In short, *Prometheus Unbound* is an allegorical expression of a condition which leads to a cyclical struggle. Prometheus, the symbol of idealistic rebellion who remains on the side of man against Power, is a 'beautiful idealism[s] of moral excellence' (p. 207), but his revolt is bound with Eternity, a figure depicted 'holding, or more often, surrounded by, a serpent bent into a circle, with its tail in its mouth, to represent the unendingness of time.'[93] Man's striving to regain 'an empire o'er the disentangled doom' (Act IV, p. 268) is that of a creature who is not only 'sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed' (III, p. 253), but also 'pinnacled dim in the intense inane' by the forces of 'chance, and death, and mutability' (III, p. 253).

The parallel 'endings'--if a visionary allegory on a human condition can be said to 'end'--consist of first Prometheus's closing meditation to Act III, and second, Demogorgon's address at the end of Act IV. These represent a double 'climax' of vision, and a double affirmation of the cyclical process which underlies all human struggle and existence itself. Earl Wasserman's analysis of the time element in Prometheus Unbound summarizes the 'sense of the non-ending' within the work:

> . . . the circular serpent, tail in mouth, is the emblem of the totality of time. Because mutability is the inherent condition of the natural world, eternity in that domain is the *moving* circle, the whole possible course of events perpetually renewing and repeating itself . . . . Life is a circle that ends where it begins, not a line that abandons one point for another.[94]

Here again the 'end within the beginning' of Prinz Friedrich von Homburg or, albeit in a less grotesquely despairing form, the cycling conflict of Dantons Tod, is visible.

## 7. The Final Throes: Closure, 1825-40

After the dramas of Byron and Shelley, few serious plays of note reach either the stage of the theatre or the 'stage' of the printed book. A movement similar to the *Biedermeier* takes place in Britain; here, however, it is more extensive, unbroken by the renewed turmoil of the *Junges Deutschland* movement. Michael Booth summarizes:

> The drama dealing with the household and family relationships, refining itself as time passes . . . did not grow up independently, but evolved as part of a melodrama which by 1825 had developed three closely related but distinctive branches: the Romantic, encompassing Gothic and Eastern melodrama; the nautical (partly Romantic and partly domestic), and the domestic itself, roughly in that chronological order.[95]

Closure tends to follow this retreat into new placidity. The popular dramas of James Sheridan Knowles provide an indication of the directions of the sense of the ending. From the 'big bang' of Virginius (1820), his dramas evolve to the watered-down William Tell (1825), where a touching but moralistic 'happy ending' closes the play. Similarly, the historical drama Alfred the Great, or The Patriot King (1831), dedicated to King Willian IV, sings of England's 'sons of the sea' and a throne with a rampart of 'living walls of hearts.'[96] The glorious march of the colonist era is evidently beginning to stir.

Literary history is, however, written as much by exceptions as by generalities. One of the most bizarre 'exceptions' of late Romanticism in England is Thomas Lovell Beddoes, son of a prominent medical researcher, cousin of Maria Edgeworth, writer of moralistic tales. This wild young man fled to the University of Göttingen at an early age, distinguished himself by uproarious bouts of drinking mixed with suicidal depressions, became passionately caught up in the Freiheitsbewegung, and finally committed suicide in Basel in 1848. He also endeavoured to set fire to the Drury Lane Theatre upon one memorable visit to his homeland. In the midst of this chequered existence, he also composed a host of dramatic fragments and two completed dramas: The Bride's Tragedy (1822) and Death's Jest-Book: The Fool's Tragedy, (1825-28; 1829-49).

The Bride's Tragedy, a pseudo-Elizabethan piece overcast with a dark shadow of Byronic Satanism, oozes forth the odours of flowers and death. The hero Hesperus, secretly married to a woman of humble origin, is persuaded to enter a more eligible partnership. His language--and the drama suffocates in a plethora of grotesque self-parading--as he murders the innocent Floribel reflects a macabre joy in violence. Similarly, the ending, a far cry from the converted didacticism of The London Merchant, dwells on a voluptuous but macabre death-wish as the 'hero' meets his just end. A moment beyond Romanticism is, as in the closure practice of Grabbe, prefigured. Symbolism of a grotesque nature propels the outcome. Offered flowers from the grave of his murdered wife, Hesperus smells them:

> It falls upon my soul
> Like an unearthly sense.
> Lenora. And so it should,
> For it is Death thou'st quaffed.[97]

Abruptly, however, the ending reaches a climax of fury, punctuated by an ironic touch. Assailed in his death throes (the flowers have been poisoned) by a delerium tremens of grotesque visions, the protagonist cries, 'I am not dead yet,' and dies.

An even more extreme work, Death's Jest-Book, presents a labyrinth of episodes swivelling between macabre comedy and equally macabre 'serious' episodes. The drama approaches (and possibly even exceeds) the collage-like profusion of developments and interior monologues in Arnim's Halle und Jerusalem and Grabbe's Herzog Theodor von Gothland. Grotesquely the decay and Untergang of a medieval society is depicted. In a litter of bodies which one-by-one fall to adorn the festival of a 'dance of Deaths' in 'Death's Harvest-Home' (p. 485), the closing scene of the vast kaleidoscope of the drama depicts the final exit of the last survivor of the medieval court. Fittingly, he is escorted, still alive, into a charnel-house by the ghost of a rival he has murdered.

Less amusing than the ending of Beddoe's Danse Macabre, one drama of surprising depth comes from Douglas Jerrold, a popular stagewriter who, in his prolific career, created chiefly melodramas, such as the temperance play, Fifteen Years of a Drunkard's Life! (1828) and Black Eyed Susan (1829), a nautical melodrama. Thomas à Becket (1829) is an unusually powerful episodic drama dealing with a particularly turbulent era of British history. In the midst of this circle of confusion is the chameleon-figure of the Archbishop. One mark of the dramatist's skill lies in the kaleidoscopic portrayal of this man, a central puzzle of his age. He is no longer the romantic hero who struts, swaggers, and analyzes his feelings. Rather, he is an enigma viewed through the fragmentary scraps of conversation of those around him. By extension, his sudden murder in the cathedral and the formation of a stunned group of onlookers around him transform the tableau into a structure expressing bewilderment and the enigma of history.

In Jerrold's drama, the tableau structure comes to adopt a central significance. It represents more than a mere dramatic effect, a freezing of action that holds surprise and suspense. Rather, it is the affirmation of the sense of nothingness that lies at the heart of the drama. Already in the first act, a seemingly casual conversation has presented a central image. To look at the clouds, Swart says, is not an idler's pastime:

> Trust me, the monsters that our fancy fashions in the sky, are not more monstrous than the monsters of the earth. Its pageants, ceremonies, are aptly mirrored in the fleeting mist that drives above them.[98]

Later the Archbishop takes up the same theme; the romantic image has now, however, undergone a transmutation: the 'clouds' are no longer mist but insects:

> . . . where now is the humming swarm? Worldly greatness!
> 'til the silken semblance of a giant, blown out with wind:
> but prick the shining covering, silently colossus shrinks
> into a pigmy, and the vile herd that shook and bowed before
> the monster, now use his shrunk skin to carpet their ungrateful
> feet. (II, iii, pp. 27-28)

From mist to insect swarms to a silken inflated colossus, and finally, to a shrunken skin on a carpet where former admirers wipe their feet--the image, in the closing tableau, transforms itself yet again. It ceases to be a figure of speech, and becomes, rather, the reality that demonstrates the truth of the metaphor. The tableau structure has thus ceased to be a mere gesture which reinforces an emotional response, but it now a component of a network of symbols which convey an ethos.

8. The development of closure in the English romantic drama reflects, to a large extent, the tendencies that have so far in the present study been observed on a larger international scale. A remarkable parallelism links the closural structures and functions of both the English and German drama of the period; the forthcoming stage of our study will extend this affinity to the French.

At the commencement of the English Romantic movement, however, closure appears to be somewhat more moderate, both in its rejection of traditional structures and in its content, than the German. More emotional restraint is visible, and the transcendent vision infusing Tieck's _Genoveva_ and Arnim's _Halle und Jerusalem_ is absent. Even the climactic vision of Shelley's _Prometheus Unbound_ is basically monistic, bound to human existence in the time of eternity within the space of earth. This absence of a transcendent vision, along with a greater aim to contain the drama within the lines of a cohesive narrative, lends to a somewhat more reserved expression and a more limited use of collage structures in English romantic closure.

Even more than among their German contemporaries, however, the English poet-dramatists are faced with the tension between 'culture proper' and 'popular culture.' The structures and content of closure reflect this antagonism. Ironically, the Romantic movement has aimed at direct communication, at the spontaneity of 'the man speaking to men.' It has attempted, and in large part succeeded, in resuscitating the stores of folk culture. At the same time, the spread of literacy and the creation of a vast new audience of theatre-goers separate from 'high culture' by the concerns of their lifestyle in an Industrialist age have isolated the 'literary dramatist.' Melodramatic closure has seized upon the sensational structures and content which are a by-product of Gothic and romantic sensibility, but injected the ethos of a bourgeois society. Hence the predominance of climactic structures in melodramatic closure, and the inclusion of a more dense variety of structure, welded with sustained questioning and ever-deepening pessimism in the ending of the 'literary' drama. As the same time, the spectacular 'tricks' and shrill emotional responses of the melodrama also invade the reading drama.

The dominant tendency of English romantic criticism to separate 'literature' from 'popular' art leads, however, to only a partial view of the British romantic drama. As our study of closure has emphasized, an osmotic-symbiotic relationship exists between the works of the poet-dramatists and the popular. Romantic drama and the stage drama are concurrent developments with a common ancestry and tend, for at least the first three decades of the nineteenth century, to interfuse structurally and thematically. To claim, therefore, that the Romantic movement had no lasting effect on the theatre is a misconception. On the stage of the theatre and the stage of the printed drama, moreover, the paralyzing influence of the Shakespearean model and the overriding preoccupation with character and passion are felt, and communicate themselves in closure.

In both German and English romantic closure, the preconception that Romanticism is synonymous with idealism and infinite sources of personal vision is refuted. While traces of this desire to recreate reality are visible in the early stages of both English and German closure, questioning, the sense of threat, and the fatalistic circularity of the world tragedy predominate. With Beddoes as with Grabbe and Buchner, closure is simultaneously a perpetuation and a mockery of the themes and diction of Romanticism, and a grotesque, nihilistic _Umwertung_.

Toward the decline of English Romanticism, closural practice in the popular drama diverged more markedly from that of the reading or 'poetic' forms. While the Romantic has become more and more aware of his isolation in a materialistic society, the ending of the successful stage drama reflects the prevalent values and concerns of the age. As Moncrieff's comment on _Thomas à Becket_ has emphasized, the mass of theatre-goers demand content which reflects 'man's businesses and bosoms.' The shattering historical vision of _Marino Faliero_ and the eternal conflict of love against power in _Prometheus Unbound_ are foreign to the ethos of the Victorian drawing room. The happy ending of Bulwer-Lytton's immensely popular _Money_ (perf. 1840) combines both 'business' and 'bosom:'

> Eve. . . . . You have reconciled me to the world and to mankind . . . . it is our own fault if we do not find such natures, though rare and few, as redeem the rest, brightening the shadows that are flung from the form and body of the TIME with glimpses of the everlasting holiness of truth and love.
> Graves. But for the truth and the love, when found, to make tolerably happy, we should not be without---
> Lady Frank. Good health;
> Graves. A good heart;
> Smooth. An innocent rubber;
> Geor. Congenial tempers.
> Blount. A pwoper degwee of pwudence;
> Stout. Enlightened opinions;
> Gloss. Constitutional principles;
> Sir John. Knowledge of the world;
> Eve. And----plenty of Money![99]

# NOTES

[1] From 1965 onward, the appearance of anthologies, book-length studies and articles has begun to fill the gaps still remaining. The researcher is still forced to search amid incomplete library collections for the lesser-known texts or avail himself of the Lord Chamberlain Collection in the British Library and the Larpent Collection at the Huntington Library; nevertheless, Michael Booth's edition of *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969-76) 5 vols., with his comprehensive notes, is invaluable. His commentaries and historical background to this compilation have been republished in his *Prefaces to English Nineteenth-Century Theatre*, (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1980). A published dissertation by Christine Brinckmann, *Drama und Offentlichkeit in der englishchen Romantik: Eine Untersuchung zum Verhaltnis von Theater und esedrama*, Anglo-American Forum, 7, Diss. Hamburg, 1976 (Frankfurt/M.: Lang, 1977) is a valuable addition to the thorough research of other German scholars, such as Robert Fricker, *Das historische Drama in England von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart*, Schweitzer Anglistische Arbeiten (Berlin: Francke, 1940); Vol. VI: *1750-1880* of *The Revels History of Drama in English* (London: Methuen, 1975), a collaborative study by Michael Booth, Richard Southern, Frederick and Lise-Lone Marker and Robertson Davies, supplements and updates the standard reference work of Allardyce Nicoll, *Early Nineteenth Century Drama, 1800-1850*, Vol. IV of his *History of English Drama*, 1660-1900, (Cambridge: University Press, 1955); see also L.W. Conolly and J.P. Wearing, *English Drama and Theatre, 1800-1900, A Guide to Information Sources,* American Lit., English Lit., and World Literatures in English Information Guide Series, 12. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1978). *Essays on Nineteenth Century British Theatre*, ed. Kenneth Richards and Peter Thomson, Proceedings of a Symposium sponsored by the Manchester University Department of Drama (London: Methuen, 1971), provides a theatre-centered study. Joseph W. Donohue's *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970) is extremely well documented and illustrates the value of an approach combining the resources of drama and theatre. Two general studies of the 'literary' romantic drama, Pratyush Ranjan's *The Romantics' Third Voice: A Study of the Dramatic Works of the English Romantic Poets*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature (Poetic Drama and Poetic Theory, 41) (Salzburg: Institut fur Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1978) and Richard M. Fletcher's *English Romantic Drama, 1795-1843: A Critical History* (New York: Exposition Press, 1966) have proved somewhat less useful to the present study than others: the former is chiefly a summary of the content of reading dramas, and the latter rather summarily defines the Romantic drama as 'drama in blank verse' (p. 19). John Ehrstine's 'The Drama and Romantic Theory: The Cloudy Symbols and High Romance,' *Research Studies of Washington State Univ.* 34 (1966), pp. 85-106, contains some incisive analyses of the interiorized focus of the reading drama, which, the author maintains, rendered it incompatible with traditional dramatic conventions. This theme is again taken up in Terry Otten's *The Deserted Stage. The Search for Dramatic Form in Nineteenth-Century England*. (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972), a vividly-written study which could perhaps take somewhat

more into account the contemporary stage drama and its links with the reading drama.

[2] 'Introduction' to Essays on Nineteenth-Century British Theatre, ed. Kenneth Richards and Peter Thomson, p. vii.

[3] William Hazlitt, Dramatic Essays (No. IV) in the London Magazine, in his Collected Works of Wm. Hazlitt, ed. A.R. Waller and Arnold Glover, intro. W.E. Henley (London: Dent, 1903), IV, p. 415. Citations will henceforth be incorporated in the text, identified as (DE, p. ---).

[4] Sir Walter Scott, Essays on Chivalry, Romance and the Drama, Chandos Classics (London: Warne, [n.d.], p. 223.

[5] Scott, 'Essay on the Drama,' pp. 223-4.

[6] See William Wordsworth, 'The Prelude, or Growth of A Poet's Mind,' Books IX, X, XI, Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. Ernest de Selincourt, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 555-575.

[7] The penetrating article of Irene H. Chayes, 'Rhetoric as Drama: An Approach to the Romantic Ode,' PMLA 79 (1964) 67-79, notes the dramatic elements of the romantic ode; an observation which may well be reversed in observing the ode-like elements of the romantic drama.

[8] A similar observation, as noted above, is reached in Ehrstine's 'The Drama and Romantic Theory,' Research Studies of Washington State University 34 (1966), 85-106.

[9] Otten, The Deserted Stage, p. 8.

[10] See Otten, pp. 3-4. His critical assessment of the 19th century drama is generally unfavourable. The major poets, he maintains, condemned the popular stage but did not rescue it from 'senile plots, pseudo-Elizabethan techniques, melodramatic claptrap, stock characterizations, and bombastic language;' he then adds that the literary giants contributed to the decline of the stage by means of their mediocrity and sentenced 'unsuspecting graduate students and literary coroners to the odious chore of exhuming the corpse'! (p. 3).

[11] Allardyce Nicoll, History of English Drama, IV, p. 61.

[12] On Planché's burlesque in the context of 'Illegitimate Drama,' see Nicholl, History of English Drama IV, pp. 149-51.

[13] MichaeL Booth, 'Preface to The Miller and his Men' in English Plays, I, p. 31.

[14] The same criteria are used here as those cited in Chapter VI, Footnote 10.

[15] See Booth, English Plays, p. 25.

[16] This drama exists in a manuscript in the Larpent Collection, Huntington Library. Although no author is given in the handwritten text, both Nicoll (p. 377) and the Larpent catalogues attribute it to Planché. No pagination.

[17] Booth, English Plays, p. 8.

[18] Otten, p. 8.

[19] See Joseph Donohue, Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age, p. 244; of general relevance is Part III of his study, 'Shakespearean characterization in the Romantic Age,' pp. 189-348.

[20] Donohue, p. 279.

[21] Donohue, p. 279.

[22] Donohue, p. 156.

[23] Donohue, p. 222.

[24] Donohue, p. 229.

[25] Donohue, p. 229.

[26] [H. Martin], Remarks on Mr. John Kemble's Performance of Hamlet and Richard III, (1802), cited by Donohue, p. 270.

[27] Mirror of Taste, 3, (1811), 196, cited by Donohue, p. 276.

[28] Hazlitt, 'Mr. Kean's Richard,' in The Morning Chronicle, Feb. 15, 1814, rpt. in A View of the English Stage, Collected Works, IV, p. 182.

[29] John Kemble Promptbooks, ed. Charles H. Shattuck, Folger Facsimiles, Series 1, Folger Shakespeare Library (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), II, p. 82. The facsimile here is that of the Cymbeline promptbook (London: Longman & Rees, 1810).

[30] Macbeth (London: Longman & Rees, 1803), p. 64, rpt. in John Kemble Promptbooks, V. Handwritten notes.

[31] Revels History of Drama in English, VI, p. 122-3.

[32] On the 'German vogue,' see Nicoll, pp. 85-8.

[33] Frederic Reynolds, Werter. A Tragedy in three Acts. As performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. Prod. Nov. 1985, pr. Dublin 1786. The Modern Theatre, selected by Mrs. Inchbald (London: Longman, etc., 1811) III, p. 294, 198.

[34] Henry Siddons, The Sicilian Romance: or, The Apparition of the Cliffs (London: Barker, 1794), p. 43.

[35] Robert Merry, Lorenzo. A Tragedy in five Acts (London: Cadell, 1791).

[36] Richard Heron, Pizarro: or, The Death of Rolla (London: Macpherson, 1799), p. 46.

[37] J. G. Holman, The Red Cross Knights. A Play in five Acts, as perf. at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. Founded on the Robbers of Schiller. First ed. (London: Cowthorn, 1799). The inner title page contains the designation 'romantic drama.'

[38] Michael Black, Poetic Drama as Mirror of the Will (London: Vision Press, 1977), p. 155.

[39] Black, pp. 157-8.

[40] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Complete Poetical Works, ed. E. H. Coleridge, (London: Oxford, 1912), II, p. 495. References henceforth in text.

[41] Although 1795-7 normally is given as the date of composition, our study follows the data in the Cornell edition of the Borderers: Wordsworth, The Borderers, ed. Robert Olson (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981. Citations in text from this edition.

[42] See Geoffrey Hartman, 'Wordsworth's The Borderers and Intellectual Murder,' Journal of English and Germanic Philology 62, iv (1963), 761-8.

[43] 'Introduction,' Cornell Borderers, p. 11.

[44] Donohue, p. 298.

[45] A.J. Harding, 'Mythopoeic Elements in "Christabel",' Modern Language Quarterly 44, i (1983), p. 46.

[46] Donohue, p. 300.

[47] Nicoll, p. 192.

[48] Nicoll, p. 194.

[49] These observations on melodramatic closure are again of a tentative nature, stemming from preliminary research on my future popular theatre study. At the present stage of research, they appear to apply to both the English and French melodrama.

[50] Nicoll, p. 159.

[51] Joanna Baillie, Series of Plays: In which it is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind, 5th ed. (London: Longman etc., 1806); citations in the text from this series will be referred to as (SP, Vol., p. ---).

[52] Baillie, Dramas (London: Longman, etc., 1836) I, p. 461.

[53] Nicoll, p. 163.

[54] F. W. Stokoe, German Influence in the English Romantic Period, 1788-1818 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1926), p. 66. Chapter Four (pp. 61-88) deals with Scott's connections with German Literature.

[55] See Stokoe, p. 70. The later edition of Götz in The Dramatic Works of J.W. Goethe, trans. Sir Walter Scott, E.A. Bowring, Anna Swanich et al.

(London: Bell, 1888) claims to leave Scott's translation of course unaltered, save for the correction of a few obvious errors' (Preface, n.p.), but actually accomplished substantial changes in the sense.

[56] *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, n.d.), *V.*, p. 229.

[58] Booth, I, p. 6.

[59] William Wordsworth, 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads,' *The Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1904, rpt. 1960), p. 735. Future citations will be in the text as (W, p. ---).

[60] Rene Wellek, *The Romantic Age*: Vol. II of his *History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1955), p. 149; see also his conclusion that, 'to make the idealistic elements palatable' to the English-speaking world, Coleridge combines them with 'the Aristotelian and empirical tradition' (p. 187).

[61] [John Galt], *The New British Theatre. A Selection of Original Dramas, not yet Acted; some of which have been offered for representation, but not accepted: with critical remarks by the editor*, 4 vols. (Vol. 4 missing from British Library collections) (London: Valply, 1814). The 'editor' appears to be the anonymous author. References henceforth in text.

[62] Booth, I, p. 32.

[63] Booth, I, p. 32.

[64] See pictorial representation of Pocock's ending in Booth, I, (Plate 2), facing p. 70.

[65] On the popularity and financial success of the drama, see Marcel Ruff's 'Introduction sur Maturin et les romantiques français in his edition of *Bertram, ou le château de Saint-Aldobrand*, trans. [Charles] Taylor and Charles Nodier (Paris: Corti, 1956), pp. 12-13.

[66] Ruff, 'Introduction' to *Bertram*, p. 16.

[67] See Ruff, p. 17.

[68] Maturin, Bertram, or the Castle of St. Aldobrand in The British Drama (London: Dicks, [1870] III, p. 680. Further references are incorporated in the text as (Dicks III, p. ---).

[69] Macready's Reminiscences (1875), ed. Sir Frederick Pollock, p. 210, Booth, I, p. 76. The text used for Virginius is from Booth's anthology, Vol. I, pp. 79-147.

[70] See Booth, I, pp. 153-6; also, for a highly readable account of the vagaries of the melodrama, his earlier English Melodrama (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965).

[71] Otten, p. 41.

[72] Otten, p. 41.

[73] See Samuel Chew, The Dramas of Lord Byron: A Critical Study (New York: Russell, 1915; rpt. 1964), esp. Chapter Three: 'Technique,' pp. 41-58.

[74] Chew, p. 43.

[75] Chew, p. 56.

[76] Chew, p. 57-9.

[77] Manfred, in Byron. Poetical Works, ed. Frederick Page, re-ed. John Jump, Oxford Standard Authors, third. ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 390. Further citations from Byron will follow this edition.

[78] Chew, p. 81.

[79] My thanks are here due to Prof. Jerome McGann (Dept. of English, California Institute of Technology) for allowing me to attend and take part in the discussion of Manfred and Marino Faliero as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities seminar on English Romanticism at the Huntington Library, July, 1983, San Marino, California. The interpretation offered here represents my attempt to answer the matter which came briefly under discussion in this session. At the same time, I should like to thank Prof. Joe Wittreich (Univ. of Maryland), co-ordinator of the seminar.

[80] Margaret J. Howell, Byron Tonight. A Poet's Plays on the Nineteenth Century Stage (Windlesham, Surrey: Springwood Books, 1982), p. 103. Chapter III, 'Manfred Transformed,' pp. 97-120, offers a readable and well-documented stage history.

[81] Chew, p. 151.

[82] Reginald Heber, in the *Quarterly Review* 17 (Nov. (?) 1822), rpt. in *Byron: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Andrew Rutherford (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p. 239.

[83] Chew, p. 103.

[84] Chew, p. 105.

[85] Howell, p. 146.

[86] J.H. Vail Motter, 'Byron's *Werner* Re-estimated: A Negelcted Chapter in Nineteenth Century Stage History,' in *Essays in Dramatic Literature: The Parrot Presentation Volume*, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Russell, 1935; rpt. 1967), p. 243.

[87] Vail Motter, p. 271.

[88] Otten, p. 44.

[89] Otten, p. 67.

[90] See Beatrice Slote, *Keats and the Dramatic Principle* (n.p.: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), p. 119; also Dorothy Hewlett, 'Otho the Great,' *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin* 4 (1952), I, cited by Slote, p. 119.

[91] *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. H.W. Garrod (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1939), (V,v), p. 378.

[92] Stuart Curran, *Shelley's Cenci: Scorpions Ringed with Fire* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 177-8. Quotations from Shelley are based on his *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967).

[93] Earl R. Wasserman, *Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A Critical Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1965), p. 213.

[94] Wasserman, p. 214.

[95] Booth, I, p. 23.

[96] J.S. Knowles, Dramatic Works (London: Moxon, 1841) I, p. 314.

[97] The Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes, ed. and intro. H.W. Donner (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935), p. 234.

[98] Jerrold, Thomas à Becket in Richardson's Minor Drama; with remarks, biographical and critical, by W.T. Moncrieff (London: Richardson [n.d.]) III, (I, i), p. 10.

[99] Edward Bulwer Lytton (Lord Lytton), Dramatic Works, in his Works, ed. anon., Knebworth Edition (New York: Collier, [n.d.]), p. 270

# CHAPTER NINE

## The French Romantic Drama

### 1. 'L'époque est favorable:' Romantic drama and theatre in France.

> Depuis longtemps, hélas! l'art et la poésie ont disparu du théâtre; le théâtre, ce charmant refuge de la fantaisie, peuplé par une nation à part avec des moeurs exceptionnelles, espèce de bohémiens de l'art campant au milieu de la civilisation, dans les forêts de toile, des places publiques et des palais de carton peint, avec le lustre pour soleil, n'est plus aujourd'hui qu'une entreprise industrielle, comme une fabrique de sucre de betteraves ou une societé pour le bitume (fonds social: un million).[1]

Had the above statement been written by a German or English Romantic, it would have referred to the Romantic Era. To the English writer, the glorious past age of the drama evoked above with such enthusiasm would have been the Shakespearean; to the German, it would possibly have been a Utopian blending of the Golden Age of Spain, the Elizabethan era in England, and a Wilhelm Meister-like Wander-Bühne. For Gautier, writing in 1858, the Atlantis of the drama and the theatre falls squarely at the height of the Romantic movement, and the decline of the theatre coincides with the passing of Romanticism.

Gautier's remark highlights a central difference between the romantic drama in France and that of the Germans and the English. While outside France, the drama of the early nineteenth century--with the exception of the work of Schiller, Goethe, Kleist and Grillparzer--continues to be the poor stepchild of the movement, who inherits the leftover scraps of critical attention, the French romantic drama--in spite of a slow and halting start--represents a crucial movement in literary history. The pessimistic remark with which Maurice Descotes begins his study of 1955, that 'l'intérêt suscité par le drame romantique ne cesse, semble-t-il, de décroître,'[2] is contradicted by the more recent survey of nineteenth century theatre by René Bourgeois and Jean Mallion, which claims that the French Romantic turns novelist by default, and that his true vocation lies in the drama. While literature, they go on to say, is normally confined to 'le silence des cabinets de lecture,' the drama possesses an 'univers intime [que] s'agrandit brusquement aux dimensions de la cité.'[3]

At the same time, the relative but short-lived prominence of the French romantic drama on the stage does not isolate it in structure or content from its German and English counterparts. As on a demographic map, the concentration of the 'centres of population' may vary, but the 'dots' yet refer to communities linked by common aims and a shared ethos. Like the German and English, the French romantic drama is essentially lyrical, a work of fits and starts, showers of imagery, twists of intrigue, absorbed introspection which suddenly gives way to the mass motion of a crowd scene. Concurrently, the character of the exceptional individual lies at the core of dramatic representation; the 'action' which, in the drama preceding the Romantic era, consists of decisions and motions spurred onward by external causes, is now replaced, to a large extent, with the internal tapestry of personal reactions and emotions. Feeling has, in a sense, become activated, so that the true dynamic process lies in its expression. The emphasis on subjective response does not, particularly with the swift motion of many French romantic dramas, indicate necessarily a paucity of plot or intrigue; rather, both cause and effect are subjectively transmitted. The consequence of an action lies not so much in the further action it generates as in the varying patterns of response it evokes within the psyche.

The form and content of the romantic drama are not only assessed by the 'literary pathologist' who, from a distance of decades or centuries, turns his attention to an already dead organism, removed from its contemporary context. Many insights into the distinctive features of the romantic drama can be gleaned from the commentary of the contemporary theatre review. Gérard de Nerval seizes upon several essential features of dramatic form and content in the French romantic era, and, by extension, in the German and English, in his commentary on the first performance of Hugo's Ruy Blas (1838):

> Jamais . . . oeuvre française ne s'est éloignée davantage des formes et des procédés de la tragédie, et n'a pu servir à tracer entre les deux genres une délimitation plus formelle. L'analyse rapide . . . ne pourra donner à nos lecteurs qu'une idée bien imparfaite de cette singuliere et puissante composition, mêlée d'histoire et de roman, de rires et de larmes, de rêverie et de vérité, qui nous paraît être l'oeuvre dramatique la plus complètement originale qu'aît encore produite l'auteur.[4]

In the view of Nerval, Ruy Blas represents the new drama that has replaced the 'tragedy.' Contrast and opposition define its form: it is both 'histoire,' i.e. historically-based, and 'roman,' a work where invention and imagination are not limited by historical fact. The polar contrasts of comic and tragic content are interwoven; at the same time, the 'unreal' component of dreams and imaginings does not exclude 'truth,' but complements and extends it. Yet another major demand imposed upon the romantic drama, that of total originality, enters into both Nerval's summarizing assessment, and into his initial observation, that in form and technique, Ruy Blas distinguishes itself from the conventional tragedy, and serves to redefine, in its fusion of tragic and comic elements, the formal delimitations of the two basic dramatic genres.

Nerval is, of course, not the first to remark on the exceptional traits of Ruy Blas. Hugo, as ever his own best polemicist, has already in his 'Préface' (Nov. 25, 1838) drawn attention to the multitude of changing points of view, the collision and antithetical shocks created by comedy in interaction with tragedy, that the drama exhibits; in his 'Note,' written after the first performance, he also refers directly to closure in his contention that the use of minute detail can render 'les catastrophes plus poignantes.'[5]

The movement which sets 'originality' at the centre of its aesthetic demands is, however, especially prone to the synchronic-diachronic forces of literary change. As Nerval once more succinctly points out, 'il est de la nature des belles oeuvres de faire le vide autour d'elles.'[6] This 'vide' is filled by an attempt at further development in the footsteps of the ideal of 'originality.' In the French romantic drama, as in the German and English, the structures and content of closure will therefore not be fixed; rather, the general typology of romantic closure will, in a parallel and divergent socio-cultural milieu, trace its own distinctive pattern of development.

## 2. Forces of Change: Closure in the Revolutionary Era and the Napoleonic Age.

Bourgeois and Mallion remark on the static nature of literary change in the pre-romantic drama in France: 'Il n'y a pas de révolution brutale dans le théâtre français.' Changes in form and content, they imply, occur well after changes in public taste.[7] One major shift, however, is inspired by the French Revolution. With the consciousness that history is being forged on a day-to-day basis, that political events affect all levels of daily life, the focus of the drama moves from the distant past to the present, and contains the embryo of the romantic relativization of history. An early example lies in Marie-Joseph Chénier's Charles IX, ou la Saint-Barthélémy (wr. 1788, perf. 1789, after initial attempts at censorship), where the weakness of the royal protagonist typologically parallels Schiller's later portrait of royalty in Die Jungfrau von Orleans. Of this drama Danton is said to have remarked that, 'si Figaro avait tué la noblesse, Charles IX tuerait la monarchie.'[8]

The ending of Charles IX reflects the rise of social and political consciousness. In the guise of a distant historical event--the massacre of 1572--referential links are set up with the contemporary battle against the monarchy. The function of closure is simultaneously outward-directed, to address current problems, and prophetic, to forecast ongoing upheavals. As the anonymous editor of a nineteenth-century edition of the drama comments, 'le style est ardent, énergique . . . quoique le plus souvent dans une forme sentencieuse.'[9] This general observation also applies to the ending. Although a certain energy and subjective involvement emerge in spite of the careful measure of the classicist diction, the conclusion yet reads like a moralistic tract.

As is usual in the 'conventional' tragedy, the messenger's report serves as the introductory motif for the final situation. Here already a certain naturalism of imagery escapes the tenets of classical diction ('Mais le crime veillait au milieu de la cour./Aux accents de l'airain sonnant les homicides,/Vomis par ce palais . . . ( V, ii, pp. 270-1; My italics). The final line of the report subjectively prefigures the sense of doom imparted by the ending: 'Le crime est sur le trône; il est temps de mourir' (V, ii, p. 272).

The ending of Charles IX brings to light one major development in the structure and function of closure: the sequel, which establishes the final situation, reflects continued conflict, first in the altercation between Henri de Navarre and Catherine de Medicis, and second, between Catherine and Charles. Reconciliation, moreover, only takes the form of Charles's remorse, and only the promise of future retribution ('Un cri s'élévera vers le ciel offensé;/Et vous rendrez le sang que vous avez versé' [V, iii, p. 274]) holds some prospect of renewed order on a purely secular level. Although, moreover, an educated public would be aware that Henri de Navarre is to be Charles's successor, the omission of this detail reinforces the chaos in which the drama ends. Henri's rousing prophecy--although the coupes are all in their 'correct' positions--evokes the image of a future cataclysm, on the external level of political revolt and on the internal or emotional level of personal guilt:

> Voius craindrez et la France, et vous-même, et la vie;
> . . .
> Le sommeil, ce seul bien qui reste aux malheureux,
> N'intérrompra jamais vos ennuis douloureux;
> . . .
> Vous gémirez: du fond des tômes menaçantes,
> Un cri s'élévera vers le ciel offensé;
> Et vous rendrez le sang que vous avez versé (V, iii, p. 274).

As an echo and even a verification of this prophecy, the final lines of Charles IX, spoken by the anti-hero protagonist, are a Macbeth-like expression of his internal torment, and sententiously conclude by bringing home the moral and the justice of the ending in a summarizing commentary:

> J'ai trahi la patrie, et l'honneur, et les lois:
> Le ciel, en me frappant, donne un exemple aux rois
> (V, iv, p. 275).

An incipient Romanticism thus escapes the Classicist boundaries of this ending. Contemporary history in the form of the Revolution has removed the carpet of social order and stability from under the represented society; the subjective expression of personal anguish suggests a rising preoccupation with character and emotion; and, like Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, the drama ends in socio-political chaos. Unlike in *Gotz*, however, no transcendent harmony is suggested, although the inherent 'justice' of the ending reflects the content and structure of the Neo-classical commentary.

Yet another signpost of change in the structure and function of closure emerges from Gabriel-Marie Legouvé's *La Mort d'Abel* (1792). A comparison of this drama with Byron's romantic *Cain* reveals certain parallels: both heroes are given to melancholy brooding and both are predestined outsiders who blend a contempt for the 'normal,' happy family member (represented in particular by Abel) with a paradoxical yearning to belong. Unlike Byron's protagonist, however, Legouvé's Cain is not so much a self-willed rebel as the product of original sin:

> Et moi, mortel créé dans un jour de colère,
> Haï de Dieu, haï de ma famille entière,
>
> . . .
>
> Mes jours, mes sombres jours, à gémir occupés
> M'apportent des enfers les maux anticipés.
> Voilà, trop faible Adam, ton ouvrage funeste![10]

Fate is thus, in this preromantic work, still a result of external causes, and not, as in Byron's Cain, an affirmation of the individual will.

The outcome of this three-act drama--in itself a departure from the conventional five-act division--is highly innovative, although it begins with remorse and the repetition of moral platitudes. The murder of Abel represents, in a shift of dramatic form, both the climax and the introductory motif. The act accomplished, Cain immediately undergoes tragic 'enlightenment:' Un frère est un ami donné par la nature' (III, iii, p. 310). The recriminations of his family join with those of God, who is, in a deus ex machina appearance, 'un nuage qui couvre tout le theatre' (III, vi, p. 313). Structurely, however, this motif does not have its usual function of 'untying' the 'dénouement.' It occurs, rather, in the middle of the outcome, and reinforces the guilt and recrimination already voiced. In one way, it partially advances the outcome by predicting that Cain will wander 'de déserts en déserts' (III, vi, p. 313); this merely reinforces, however, the protagonist's previous decision of self-imposed solitude (p. 311). The ending has thus begun, even at this early stage, to extend itself in a collage of motifs.

The most unconventional aspect of the ending occurs in the second half of the final scene. First, repeating his self-opprobrium, Cain announces his departure. His sister-wife, in spite of her husband's determination that their ties be broken, persists in following him. Three tableaux silently close the drama with a lack of final resolution. After Cain tears himself away from his wife, she follows 'de monts en monts, de rochers en rochers, qui les cachent et les font reparaître tour à tour' (III, vi, p. 314). This first wordless tableau, expansive and active, is replaced by two static ones: that of Adam and Eve immobile over Abel's body, and that of Cain, his wife and children pausing on a mountain-top for a last look at their parents.

Rebellion against God and society and a philosophical consciousness of man's eternal exile have thus not, as in Byron's Cain, replaced the didactic function of the ending in Legouvé's Mort d'Abel. A movement away from the linearity of traditional closure is yet visible in the multiplication of episodes establishing the final situation. The tableau, moreover--in the sense of the wordless depiction of a component of the final situation--is no longer, as in the 'family reunion' scenes of Diderot, merely a static maintenance of a gesture which holds the focused centre of the stage, but a wider, less focused pictorial scene with active elements. Simultaneously, the tableaux shift from the expansive motion of the first, to the stasis of the two final ones. As in Charles IX, moreover, righteous judgement does not join with a renewal of order and communal stability. In this way, Legouvé's drama also, in spite of its apolitical content, suggests the disorienting influence of the Revolution, and, in part, precurses the collage and tableau structures of romantic closure.

That the history of literary and theatrical innovation does not move forward in a linear path is, however, evident in the drama of the Consulate and the Empire. Of the revolutionary generation of unrest, Ducis, adaptor of Shakespeare in the pre-revolutionary era, had written that tragedy no longer needed to be staged, for it was now a part of life:

> La tragédie court les rues. Si je mets le pied hors
> de chez moi, j'ai du sang jusqu'à la cheville.
> J'ai beau secouer en rentrant la poussière de mes souliers,

> je me dis comme Macbeth: ce sang ne s'éffacera pas.
> Adieu donc la tragédie! J'ai vu trop d'Atrées en sabots,
> pour oser jamais en mettre sur la scène. C'est un
> rude drame que celui ou le peuple joue le tyran.
> Mon ami, ce drame-là ne peut se dénouer qu'aux enfers.[11]

The tragedy which, during the revolution, could only resolve itself in Hell, began once more to resolve itself in the pseudo-classical pomp of the Napoleonic stage. In an age which, although founded on war, yet wished to portray itself as the stronghold of glory, order, and justice, a combination of censorship and persuasion filled the theatre with the heroes of antiquity portraying national saviors. Napoleon, for instance, suggests that a drama on Henri IV is inappropriate: 'Cette époque n'est pas assez éloignée pour ne point réveiller des passions.' In its place, he demands a drama about 'un grand homme succédant à un roi dégénéré.'[12]

One testimony of the flight into convention occasioned by the demands of the Empire consists in the one-time revolutionary M.-J. Chenier's Cyrus (perf. 1804). As Theodore Muret summarizes, 'Il tâcha d'excuser cette concession [i.e., to Napoleonic rule] à ses propres yeux comme aux yeux de ses amis, par des maximes et des conseils qu'il espérait apparemment faire accepter au nouveau César.'[13] The results of his efforts at positive persuasion are illustrated by the extensive moral lecture closing Cyrus. The newly-crowned hero of the drama (Napoleon's coronation followed the drama's première by six days) is addressed as follows:

> Père des citoyens, juge pour les entendre,
> Roi pour les gouverner, soldat pour les défendre[13]

Closure has evidently resumed the admonitory function it had begun to abandon toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Hector (perf. 1809), a tragedy by Luce de Lancival, is worthy of passing mention. Distinguished by its regular alexandrines and its unallevaited dullness, it yet reveals the beginnings of an active ending. Paris, bewailing his losses after the defeat of Troy, loudly prays to the gods that he may avenge the death of Hector. A growl of thunder replies, and, confirmed in his future success, Paris cries, 'Je vous entends, ô dieux! je vous obéirai!'[14] Here, as in Abel, the deus ex machina serves, not as the prime introductory motif (the announcement of Hector's death has already partially established the final situation), but as a type of reinforcement, a sign from the gods which reverses the content and tone of the final situation from negative to positive.

The repressive political atmosphere of the empire sets back the growth of the Romantic movement in France by more than a decade. The period could, in fact, exemplify what Manfred Windfuhr refers to as 'Epochenepigonentum.'[15] Confined by censorship and self-aggrandizing nationalism to a period of flaccid imitation, the tenor of the age does not encourage the relativistic thinking and the iconoclasm of a movement which aims at replacing rigid patterns of thought, circumscribed literary conventions, and indeed, a timeworn ethos with the new, the spontaneous, and the intensely individual. More than elsewhere in Europe, moreover, the Terror and its chaotic aftermath have caused a flight into the security of political and litarary conservatism.

The stirrings of the Romantic Movement are not, however, completely submerged. Two developments counteract the Napoleonic attempt to set back the advance of literary innovation: the rise of the melodrama and the theoretical and dramatic achievements of Le Groupe de Coppet, where the influx of German Romanticism aids in the evolution of a new ethos.

## 3. Pixérécourt and the Melodrama

> The life of the neoclassical genres was artificially preserved in France by the institutions: by the monopolies given to the patented theatres, and the training in dramatic art perpetuated for their members; by an audience that regarded the Théâtre-Français as a central institution in its intense sociability; and by the dominance of neoclassical critical theory . . . [which postulated] that the genres as defined and illustrated were necessary and immutable.[16]

The attempt, highlighted by Diderot, Beaumarchais and Mercier, to propose and illustrate the possibilities of the 'drama' and its variants--the comédie larmoyante, tragédie bourgeoise et domestique--in the creation of a genre sérieux distinct from the strictures of 'tragedy' and 'comedy' had fared better in English and German literature than in the French. In the pendular swing-back of the post-revolutionary years, as outlined above, the sentimental middle-class emphasis of the drame provided no true match for renewed illusions of nationalist grandeur. Even this 'warmed-over' Empire tragedy, however, is marked by what W. D. Howarth astutely identifies as 'an intensification of the tendency, which had been apparent in most of the sentimental drama of the eighteenth century, towards the psychological simplification, and the crudity of characterization, which we associate with the melodrama.'[17]

On one level, therefore, the melodrama marks the convergence of tendencies from both the drame bourgeois (a concurrently sentimental and middle-class emphasis) and the larger-than-life poses of the tragedy. Its mixed origins do not stop here, for it is possibly the most eclectic genre of literary history before the onset of Romanticism proper. Its comic interludes combine elements of Plautinian and Aristophanic comedy. the musical components, initially predominant in the Pygmalion of

Rousseau and in the by-path it adopts in the German 'Melodram,' are gradually dropped in the course of the nineteenth century, but provide basic links with opera and Singspiel; its middle-class moralistic emphasis derives from both the Enlightenment and the drame bourgeois; its elevation of the commoner to positions of heroism, to the egalitarian philosophy of the Revolution; and its love of pantomime, dance, spectacle, disguises and dazzling revelations are a hybrid of the Baroque era, the commedia dell'arte, the street and boulevard drama, and, it may be conjectured, even the ballet. Yet another impetus causes it, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, to be at times indistinguishable from the romantic drama. The melodrama continues to borrow and lend elements of popular culture, among these, the exotic and gruesome content of the Gothic mode. This craving for the exceptional in both setting and occurrence duplicates itself in the exotic and supernatural components of the romantic drama, so that eventually an eloquent blending of the subliterary and the literary proper characterizes the form and content of both melodrama and romantic drama.[18]

The period from the late eighteenth century up to and including the 1830's represents the height of the French melodrama. Peter Brooks summarizes:

> The period under discussion is traditionally presented as a great void. . . . in fact the period was one of intense creativity, and particularly of theatrical creation. . . . Specifically, the burgeoning of Romantic drama was being prepared on the Boulevard, and the doctrines that would be presented in Hugo's Preface de Cromwell in 1827 were already partially in practice. More generally, some of the fundamental premises of the modern expressive mode, in particular its representations of ethical conflict, were being given their first trial. It would only be a slight exaggeration to argue that in France melodrama quite

> literally lies at the source of Romantic aesthetics of dramatization, in the theatre and in the novel. It appears, in any event, as their first approximation and as their radical form.[19]

In the course of the present study, the argument has increasingly been advanced that the key features of romantic closure--by our definition, the climactic, collage, circular, tableau and ironic reversal typologies, and their functions, which include the maintenance of tension and action, the posing of unresolved problems and contradictions, the implied continuation of conflict beyond the represented time of the drama, the cyclical perpetuation of chaos and uncertainty, the juxtaposition of seeming resolution with actual confusion, showing or suggesting by means of mute action, the contrastive spiralling of kaleidoscopic scenes to imply the impossibility of final harmony--all these elements, emerging from both theory and practice, may serve as a set of identifying criteria for the romantic drama. With the French melodrama of the pre-1830 period, it is therefore relevant to inquire whether so-called romantic closural traits can be identified.

René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt, the 'father of the melodrama,' is also a foremost apologist for the genre he practises.[20] His prefaces and the lengthy treatise, L'Essai sur le melodrame (wr. [ ?]; [rpt. ?] 1825), tends, however, to contraindicate the possible affinities between melodramatic and romantic closure.[21] The author's summarizing statement of his 'defense of the melodrama' gathers together the themes of useful moral instruction and entertainment by means of spectacle for the unlettered masses which pervade his argument:

> N'avons-nous pas tout dit sur la justice de maintenir, de tolérer, d'encourager même, s'il le faut, le genre du mélodrame, que l'expérience

> a placé, malgré ses détracteurs, au rang des moyens fructueux d'éclairer, en l'intéressant, un peuple industrieux à qui il faut des spectacles? (p. xix)

From both a political and moral standpoint, his defense supports the status quo maintaining that the 'influence utile' of the melodrama 'propage et soutient l'esprit national' (p. xvi). These stated aims suggest that the melodrama will not be free of the moral commentary, mixed with domestic sentiment, characteristic of closure in the bourgeois drama of the eighteenth century. At the same time, the essay of Pixerecourt does not constitute an entirely reliable statement. In his anxiety to defend a subliterary genre from its detractors, he conceiveably places it in a favourable socio-political light. The decisive test lies therefore in the structure and content of melodramatic closure.

La Forêt de Sicile, 'drame lyrique en deux actes et en prose . . . représenté, pour la première fois, au théâtre [sic] des Variétés, Jardin Égalité, le 4 floréal de l'an 6:' when this, one of Pixerecourt's earliest dramas, appears, the revolution is barely over, and the revolutionary calendar still proclaims the beginning of a new era which has audaciously supplanted not only the days, months, and years of the Christian calendar, but also--or so it claims--the vestiges of old society. By the same token, the contemporary reader who moves from Luce de Lancival's Hector--chronologically a later drama than that of Pixérécourt--to La Forêt de Sicile has the impression that a new type of drama has started without his realization. Concurrently, he feels as if he has rejoined the mainstream of European literature. After the worn heroic poses of the Napoleonic theatre, represented by Hector, La Forêt de Sicile replaces French drama in the European tradition, with the Gothic settings and themes of Walpole, Colman and Lewis in England, and the bandit-heroes and picaresque advantures of *Die Räuber* and other German dramas, such as those of Zschokke. The stage directions of Pixérécourt's play are themselves indicative of an imagination nurtured on pre-Romanticism: '*Le théâtre représente une épaisse forêt. Des arbres touffus . . . dérobent presqu'entièrement à la vue une cabane placée dans le fond. . . . Au lever du rideau, il fait un orage violent*.'[22] Gesture, mood and tonality impart vigour to the dialogue and suggest the constant rising and subsiding of emotion:

> Antonia, (*avec force*) Homme féroce!
> Roberto, (*avec indifférence*) On me le dit tous les jours.
> . . .
> Antonia, (*avec énergie*) peux—tu braver la vengeance du ciel?
> . . .
> Roberto, (*d'une voix terrible*) Allons, paix! tes clameurs me fatiguent. (I, [I, ii] p. 6)

At the same time, the above dialogue highlights two other basic elements: the stark opposition of good and evil, and the sublimely virtuous tone of the 'good.'

No danger exists, moreover, that either the past or present action should be misunderstood. No sooner has Robert gleefully left on yet another mission of evil, than Antonia enlightens the spectator by providing the necessary background: that Robert has kidnapped her, and only for the sake of her child does she cling to an ignoble existence. The universe is nevertheless populated with comic-book monsters: robbers who complain of the weight of their spoils ('cette valise est diablement lourde . . .' I, iv, p. 9) and sit under a tree to gossip about their misdemeanours, punctuated by the ironic 'à part' comments of a buffoon-servant hidden in the branches above them. With immense convenience, the fantastic accidents and coincidences of this fantastic world fall in place, and lead to a triumphant but action-packed ending. Leaving a carpet of dead brigands behind them, the virtuous victims escape from their imprisonment in the outlaw's cottage, not before, however, the necessary revelations of identity take place. Antonia is actually Dorothée, the abducted housekeeper of Count Lorenzo, also held captive by the bandits; why her master has failed to recognize her before, having spent a night in captivity with her, is left unexplained.

The ending of this early melodrama--before Pixerecourt applies the designation--is thus a part of the exposition. The main event of the outcome, the death of the brigands, has already taken place; for the definitive restoration of happiness amid strengthened communal ties, only an additional twist of intrigue, Antonia's revelation, is necessary. Comedy reinforces the suggestion that the outcome, like the drama, is only mock-serious. Fabio, the buffoon-servant, addresses his master's heavy suitcase, now again in its rightful owner's hands, with words of joy: 'Cette chère valise! vas, vas, tu l'as échappé belle!' A general chorus, like that of Colman's Mountaineers, finally praises heaven for its bounty.

The ending of Coelina, ou l'enfant du mystère (perf. 1800), although somewhat more complex than that of La Forêt de Sicile, repeats the basic pattern of apprehension of the villains, followed by the solidification of renewed family harmony and a choral finale. Several variations have, however, been introduced. The ending consists, as in the earlier play, of a violent combat, where dialogue gives way to involved but precise stage directions. Once the villains are subdued, a tableau reinforces the end to conflict: 'Michaud [the villain's son] . . . descend rapidement, se place entre Truguelin et les paysans, et relève les armes dirigées contre Truguelin (Tableau).' With the sententious statement that 'l'homme vertueux punit, mais il n'assassine pas,' the son thus saves the life of his erring but remorseful father (II, [III, XI] p. 53). Thereupon the motif of revelation again ensues: the motivation for the hero's persecution is revealed, along with the surprise relationships which also characterize the ending of Diderot's Le Père de famille (1768). Now that the heroine's birth has been proved honourable (and wealthy), she is free to marry the man of her choice. A second marriage, however, serves as a grotesque counterpart: Coelina's maidservant, caught up in the marital enthusiasm, promptly proposes to the servant-buffoon, who accepts on the grounds that he likes weddings: 'On danse, on chante, et puis c'est une occasion de montrer ses petits talents' (III, xii, p. 54). At this point, the group is reminded that the occasion is indeed festive; to do it justice, all join in a dance and take part in a ronde. One telling detail, however, is included in the final tableau: 'On forme un tableau grotesque et la toile tombe' (p. 55; my italics). With the final 'grotesque' pose, and the preceding contrast between a 'sentimental' engagement and a burlesque one, the suspicion arises that a self-ironizing process is taking place. It appears, in fact, that the ending mocks its own facile solutions to the conflict and shatters dramatic illusion by recasting the entire drama into the realm of fantasy. This simultaneous making and breaking of illusion suggests that the ethos of the ending, and of the drama as a whole, is far more sophisticated than prevalent notions of the 'crudeness' of melodrama would allow. In nuce, a parallel between the closure practice of Tieck's 'comic fairytale-dramas' and the Zauberspiel of Raimund and Nestroy emerges; at the same time, the endings of both La Forêt de Sicile and

Coelina appear to employ the 'ironic reversal'--a final pinprick which deflates the pseudo-serious content of the ending--that is here advanced as a characteristic structure of romantic closure, and contains elements of the theory and practice of romantic irony.

By way of summary, closure in two of Pixérécourt's early melodramas contains definite carryovers from the affective-didactic endings of the bourgeois drama. The choral *finale*, also characteristic of the early British melodrama, forms part of both endings. In *Coelina*, the tableau structure is also employed, with, however, an ironic suggestion. The ending has, moreover, become elaborate. An introductory motif (discovery of the villains' machinations) leads in both dramas to a combat which is also the climax of the drama. The sequel, however, not only establishes the victory of good over evil, but also injects auxiliary motifs, such as the revelation of identify and motivation. In this way, surprise developments are held back and sprung at the spectator with the aim of creating, in a manner of speaking, 'mini-outcomes.' The potentially tragic plot, however, is completely and happily resolved--barring the ironic jolts administered by the inclusion of buffoonery.

Other melodramas by Pixérécourt, such as *Rosa, ou l'hermitage du torrent* (1800) conclude dynamically, without dialogue. In a convergence of ending and climax, a pitched physical conflict resolves itself happily and, in the final tableau, 'tous s'embrassent, Rosa rouvre les yeux, reconnoît les objets de son amour, et les reçoit dans ses bras. Tableau general' (I [III, xvii], p. 36). *Le Pèlerin blanc* (1802) employs the stock revelation episode and ends in a 'tableau touchant et expressif.'

From the indications supplied by closure in Pixérécourt's early plays, the typology is still 'transitional'. Particularly if the 'ironic reversal' of *La Forêt de Sicile* and *Coelina* is disregarded, the endings are not romantic. Although final tableaux are present in both *Rosa* and *Le Pélerin blanc*, they are not expressive of sustained action and tension but of harmony. Only later will melodramatic closure approximate that of the romantic drama.

## 4. The German Influx and Closure: Mme de Staël and Benjamin Constant

Our chapter dealing with closure theory among the romantics has already singled out Mme de Staël and Benjamin Constant as 'hesitant romantics.' Even in this capacity, their awareness of modes of closure other than those of the Classicist and Sentimentalist movements is significant. More important than explicit statements concerning the structure and function of an 'ideal' ending, which goes, in fact, against the romantic aesthetics of spontaneity and originality, is the dramatist's view of what constitutes drama. The ending is an outgrowth of the much larger phenomenon of romantic drama.

The recent article by Martine Rougement reinforces the importance of closure in the aesthetics of Constant. Citing Hegel, she comments that, for the German philosopher, 'la dissolution du héros permet sa résorption dans l'unité objective, comparée à la paix des dieux dans l'Olympe. Elle est un retour à l'harmonie.'[23] Constant's view of the ending is far more pessimistic. The massive consequences of focusing on the individual against a moving screen of world history are here evident. Closure can no longer definitively signal a return to communal stability, for an unbridgeable dichotomy separates the aims of the protagonist and the ethos he represents from 'the way of the world.'

Not only the preface to *Wallstein* as examined from a closural viewpoint in Chapter Five, but also Constant's later *Réflexions sur la* tragédie (1829), provide essential insights into the early Romantic's 'sense of the ending.' In this article he recalls the criticism of a friend on his Wallstein: 'Il faut qu'une grande idée, une idée unique domine votre pièce. Il faut que Wallstein conspire contre la maison d'Autriche, pour établir un vaste systeme de liberté politique et religieuse.'[24] To this objection, Constant's reply is that Wallstein is not an Enlightenment hero but a man of the seventeeth century (O, p. 943-4). A more accurate response would have been that Wallstein's creator, and his German forebear Schiller, are no longer entrenched in the eighteenth century, but have emerged into the ethos of the nineteenth. His further reply is worthy of quotation in full:

> . . . cette alternative, lui dis-je, d'où nos poètes ne peuvent sortir qu'en sacrifiant l'intérêt, ou en renonçant à la vérité, restreint fort la carrière, et les caractères, tels qu'il nous les faut sur la scène française, sont ou deviendront, comme les passions, insuffisants pour les compositions dramatiques (O, p. 944; my emphasis).

Constant's assertion serves here as both a justification of a complex view of character, emotion, and historical events in the drama, and as a justification of new closural structures and content. Obliquely, he provides a reason for the development of the phenomena outlined in the present study: traditional dramatic forms, represented by established norms of closure, no longer suffice to adequately render the nascent romantic view of character, history, and aesthetics. In effect, Constant replies that the dramatist should not transpose his concept of reality into the distorting vehicle of conventional dramatic form, but that the receiver should adapt his own preconceptions of what constitutes drama to the expanded ethos of the nineteenth century.

At the same time, Constant realizes that the individual fights a losing battle with the crushing forces that illustrate the intransigence of the historical process. Fate, however, lies both without and within: man is feeble, limited in his power, prone to mistaken perception and action, while the world 'disorder,' as opposed to 'order,' imposes defeat. From the heroic poses of the Empire tragedy, Constant brings us to a Kleistian or Buchneresque sense of an existential labyrinth:

> Lorsque l'homme, faible, aveugle, sans intélligence pour se guider, sans armes pour se défendre, est, à son insu et sans son aveu, jeté dans ce labyrinthe qu'on nomme le monde, ce monde l'entoure d'un ensemble de circonstances, de lois, d'institutions, de relations publiques et privées. Cet ensemble lui impose un joug qu'il ignore, qu'il n'a pas consenti, qui pèse sur lui comme un poids préexistant, et contre lequel, quand il apprend à le connaître, et qu'il sent le fardeau, il ne lui est donné de combattre qu'avec une inégalité marquée et de grands dangers (O, p. 944).

Even more than Hugo's 'Preface à Cromwell,' a work which has possibly been placed in a position of undue prominence stemming from notoriety, Constant's above statement may be viewed as a romantic manifesto of closure. In the post-Enlightenment, post-Revolutionary world infused with a sense of the individual and historical fatality, fragmentation and destruction are built-in elements of closure. Even when the tricks of melodrama transpose incipient tragedy into the domain of wish-fulfillment, jarring reminders, in the self-mockery of burlesque (as in Coelina and La Forêt de Sicile) are inserted to recall the receiver to actuality.

The ending of Wallstein, however, lags behind the consciousness articulated in Constant's later theory of 'tragedy,' a term which here, as elsewhere in Romanticism, is loosely employed. Nevertheless, a sense of sustained disorder escapes from the edges of an attempt to 'round off' the drama in a somewhat more optimistic light than that of Schiller. Constant's Wallstein has been transformed into a more positive, less divided figure than Wallenstein. Loyal and noble, he decries the implacable hatred and shifting loyalties of his henchmen:

> La pitié n'entre point dans leur coeur implacable.
> Mobile est leur amour, leur haine inexorable.[25]

The exalted diction of the French text also endows to Wallstein a nobility and dignity more ambiguously rendered by Schiller. Conscious of his imminent downfall, for instance, the hero reveals more than a mere tired passivity; aware that 'trop de coups ont usé ma force et mon courage' (W [V, x], p. 182), he goes to sleep in the hope that rest will disperse the forebodings and self-doubt within him.

The intrigue is furthermore simplified in the French version, and at least a token attempt made to impose a sense of unified, continuous development. Thekla (Fr. 'Thécla') does not merely vanish from the plot in a romantic Selbstvernichtung, but becomes a dominant force. To her, for instance, news is brought of Wallstein's political betrayal: 'Ciel! mon père est trahi' (W V, xi , p. 183). The representation of Wallstein's death is, moreover, less graphic than in the original Wallensteins Tod and forms a single significant development, and not merely the base layer in a confusion of simultaneous developments. Gallas ('Octavio') has already arrived to wrest control of Wallstein's castle, when a messenger's report (a reflection of Neo-Classical tragedy) announces the hero's death. The murder is clearly attributed to Gallas's orders (W [V, xiii], p. 184), and no naturalistic 'thump' emerges from behind the scenes. Further confrontation is limited to Gallas and Thécla; the abruptly-inserted motif of the Gräfin's suicide, the sudden revelation of Octavio's successful drive for power, and the enigmatic tableau of his final stance are absent. The accomplishment of heavenly justice pervades Constant's ending. Overcome by remorse, Gallas cries out that 'moi-même j'ai traîné mon fils et mon ami!' Tragic awareness dawns on him: 'Wallstein! Wallstein! hélas! le ciel t'a trop vengé' (W [V, xiii], p. 187); in other words, the death of Alfred (Max) has been a heaven-sent punishment. Taking up the theme of divine retribution, Thécla's closing words pour oil over the troubled waters. Her sententious statement, along with Gallas's foregoing words, constitute the traditional 'commentary.' God has, Thécla claims, both punished and forgiven Gallas; now he must merit this absolution. He is to protect the supporters of her dead father from the 'fureurs d'une cour ennemie,' thereby honouring a previously-betrayed friendship. She herself will devote her life to prayer and grieving memory:

> Je vais d'un Dieu sévère appaiser le courroux,
> Et pleurer sur Alfred, sur mon père, et vous
> (W V, xiii , p. 188).

In this way, Wallstein's personal defeat is transmuted into the replacement of a vanquished political movement with a new. Continuity is thus preserved. The awareness still lingers, however, that treason lies at the heart of the new order. The retribution and forgiveness of God are voiced in a purely personal context, and the demand that Gallas should protect Wallstein's supporters serves merely as a band-aid gesture of appeasement. With Thécla's final determination to withdraw into a world of prayer and grief, the sense of unalleviated disaster is not fully dispersed. What emerges from the conventional structure and content of the sequel and commentary is a sensation of discomfort, as if Constant is, under considerable strain, superimposing a traditional ending on a Stoff and ethos which are foreign to the Classicist structures and functions of closure. The ending has been 'doctored' to conform to the expectations of a pre-romantic French public.

The 'Groupe de Coppet,' with its two prominent French voices, those of Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant, is also the voice of a developing French romantic drama; as Danielle Johnson-Cousin maintains, 'Nul n'a jamais mis en doute . . . l'importance donnée à l'activité théâtrale au sein du Groupe de Coppet.'[26] The dominant background voice, that of A. W. Schlegel, heard primarily through that of Madame de Staël, is at the same time not slavishly echoed; rather, De l'Allemagne (released 1813) is a critical assessment of Schlegelian thought blended with the views and literature of a large number of German pre-romantics and romantics. In the progression from De la littérature (1800) to De l'Allemagne, Staël's criticism reveals a major growth in maturity and flexibility. Johnson-Cousin summarizes the major advances in the dramatic theory of the later work:

> Sa conception de l'art se rapproche de la vie. Reconnaissant la complexité et l'inconséquence même du caractère de l'homme, Mme de Staël comprend et accepte le mélange du tragique et du comique dans la tragédie. L'idée du'un génie national s'affermit chez elle, probablement au contact de Schlegel, sans toutefois se fixer en une notion rigide et étanche . . . elle laisse definitivement loin derrière elle La Harpe et son concept d'un goût parfait absolu auquel toutes les autres nations doivent se plier.[27]

These views, joined with an awareness of the contrasts inherent in art and life ('le vulgaire . . . se mêle souvent au sublime'[28]), lay the foundations for a dialectical, relativistic ethos. The dynamic but vast expansion of such a Weltanschauung has its predictable effects on closure. Imbued with constrast and a sense of flux, the ending becomes more than a mere gathering up and bringing to a point of arrival of the lines of the dramatic intrigue. As Mme. de Staël articulates in her discussion of Goethe's Egmont, life offers no 'dénouement,' and it is up to the dramatist and his knowledge of the stage to find an ending (OC, X, p. 485). Her relativism has thus expanded to the subject of closure: no set rules or models exist. The individual work, in contact with the dynamics of theatrical reception, must determine the content and structure of the ending. As with Constant, however, a certain ambivalence must be kept in mind. Convention is to both dramatist-theoreticians deeply entrenched. This wavering between the old and the new is suggested by de Staël's reference to the demands of the stage. Drama is, to her, made to be performed, and public taste must therefore be satisfied. In her awareness of the stage and her willingness to accommodate her practice to its specifications, she voices a predominant attitude of the French romantic drama, one that distinguishes it sharply from the German and English.

The slim volume of Essais dramatiques forms a little-known section of Mme. de Staël's writings. It consists of Agar dans de désert (1806), a 'scène lyrique,' Geneviève de Brabant (1808), a prose drama, Sapho (1811), a five act drama in prose, and three comedies: Le Capitaine Kernadec, ou sept années en un jour (1810), La Signora Fantastici (1811) and Le Mannequin (1811). The distinctive quality of the serious dramas lies in the quiet simplicity of the language and the sentimental, sympathetic portrayal of female protagonists. They reflect, in large part, the religious devotion and interest in the miraculous manifestations of the religious spirit that pervades Chateaubriand's Le Génie du Christianisme (1802).

Closure in the serious dramatic experiments of Madame de Stael reveals little effort to duplicate the practice of German dramatists. Agar is, for instance, as its subtitle 'scène lyrique' suggests, merely a brief episode depicting the sufferings of an unjustly banished woman and her child, and their miraculous salvation from death through the deus ex machina appearance of a guardian angel. In its tone of simple devotion, the ending possesses little of the rhetorical abandon of romantic closure. The final situation reflects 'la leçon de bonheur' which succeeds 'celle de l'infortune' (O, XVI, p. 19). Prophecy, which at times is a component of the climatic ending in the romantic drama, here adopts the function of prefiguring, in the subdued tone of the entire drama, the final triumph of the meek and virtuous.

The atmosphere of the moral tale, blended with that of the religious mystery, repeats itself in the other serious dramas of de Staël, with the exception of Sapho, and leads to the same final tone of harmony. The idea of 'intrigue' is absent in her series of dramatic sketches. Only Sapho contains hints of innovative closure. Here the exclamations and anguished remorse of Cléone and Phaön are counterbalanced by the calming statements of Alcée. One impulse does not, however, triumph over the other: Cléone remains unconscious in the arms of Diotime as Alcée delivers his final message, that 'une bienfaisante pensée' underlies the seemingly harsh decrees of Apollo (XVI [V, vi], p. 360). More than with Constant, a wide distance still separates the closure of de Staël from that of the Romantics.

## 5. The ending redefined and restructured: the beginnings of the French romatic drama.

The last decade of the eighteenth century and the first fifteen years of the nineteenth have suggested that, in the context of romantic closure, significant changes are still on the level of theory. A reversal of the tendency in German and English Romanticism is here evident, for practice in both literatures appears to precede all but general theoretical statements.

One of the first signs of a thaw in Classicist-based closure comes with Népomucène Lemercier. Already with his Pinto, ou la Journée d'une conspiration (1800) he had, as Michèle Jones claims, 'inventé la comédie historique moderne.'[29] A brief reference in A. W. Schlegel's Vorlesungen II on the subject of stage decoration in the French melodrama mentions Christophe Colomb (perf. 1809), which ends with the sighting of land at a distance and the excited cries of the sailors.[30] The 1828 edition of Lemercier's Richelieu (perf. 1804) contains, in an authorial preface, a delineation of the aims of the 'tragi-comédie' with a historical subject: '. . . j'aperçus qu'en dépouillant ces éminents personnages du faux appareil qui les couvre . . . il en résulterait un genre vrai, moral, instructif, qui apprendrait au peuple à demasquer la basse politique, et lui montrerait les grands en déshabillé . . . mis à nu sous le fouet de la satire.'[31] By applying the 'unmasking' function of comedy to a serio-comic historical drama, Lemercier implies the existence of an ironic gap between surface meaning and intent--a device which foreseeably could also affect closural structure.

The ending of Frédégonde et Brunehaut (perf. 1821) makes use of such an ironic juxtaposition of outward and inner meaning. The intrigue, based on the rivalry of two queens, concludes with the victory of Frédégonde who, in a final act of self-seeking ambition, poisons Mérovée, the husband of Brunehaut. The archbishop Prétextat (whether the implied pun in his name is intentional remains a matter of conjecture) launches into a moralistic diatribe at this proof of evil-doing, imploring the King, Chilpéric, to reform: 'Legitimez ses [ces?] coups qui vous feront haïr.'[32] Chilpéric's reply is full of ironic meaning: 'Arrêtez! respectez votre maître . . . et la reine.' On the surface, he is indeed 'master,' but, as the pause and the seeming afterthought suggest, he is a mere figurehead. The drama concludes with the scheming monologue of Frédégonde: now, she says to herself, her husband fears her; her power is nevertheless certain. Only an 'heureux coup' needs to be administered to the young Clovis, and the rights of succession will be clear for her own sons.

The ending of this now forgotten drama by Lemercier is significant for two reasons. First, it represents a reversal of the traditional triumph of good over evil. Unlike Phèdre, for instance, Frédégone is not a victim of fatal passion, but a villainess. Secondly, Frédégonde et Brunehaut provides our first example in French nineteenth century drama of a 'circular' ending. The network of evil machinations, the heroine-villainess's final words indicate, has not resolved itself, but will continue in yet another phase of intrigue.

An overview of the Oeuvres complètes of Ancelot, a popular dramatist of the Restoration, confirms that a new movement in closure is now underway. His first tragedy, Louis IX (1819) is written in alexandrines and traces the noble figure of the King through myriads of misadventures until the required series of eulogies, mutual compliments, and affirmations of the power of God and the magnanimity of Louis IX. Ancelot's next drama, however, marks a major transformation. Le Maire du Palais (1823) is a character study of the Machiavellian Ebroïn, a kingmaker. Having confined the legitimate king, Thierry, in a monastery, the villain-hero places a pretender in his stead. This idealistic young man, believing himself to be the legitimate ruler, proves virtuous and refuses to be the puppet of Ebroïn. The Pretender exits (by poison) and Thierry is reinstated. Enlightened to the true character of his pseudo-protector, the King finally realizes that he is the toll of the 'maire du palais.'

Not only the content but also the diction of the ending undergoes a great change from Neo-Classicist models in Le Maire du Palais. The dialogue has taken on a passionate intensity, marked by frequent caesuras, pauses, and exclamations. Revelations and sudden developments are staggered throughout the final act. The rapid, tumultuous exchange of words resembles a series of swift blows:

> Ebroïn: Comment?
> Bathide: De mon époux la perte est résolue.
> Ebr: Qui vous l'a dit?
> Bat: Mon père.
> Ebr: Il est vrai.
> Bat.: Je frémis.[33]

With the bodies of the virtuous false king, Clovis, and Bathilde beside them, Thierry and Ebroïn exchange final words of the drama. Their parallel threats force the tension and despair of the final situation to hover uneasily:

Thierry: Sur le trône avec moi va s'asseoir la vengeance.
(Il se place auprès de Clovis et de Bathilde)
Ebroïn sur le devant de la scène:
Vain espoir! malgre lui coupable et couronne,
Sur un trône flétri je le tiens enchaîné!
(V, v, p. 62)

Their motions also reflect the uneasy state of continued conflict: Thierry, at the side of his daugheter and her husband (like Ruy Blas, a noble upstart), has reason for vengeance, while Ebroïn, in his position of scheming strength, now holds the upper hand. Nevertheless, he knows himself hated by the people, and is, like Thierry, vulnerable.

The ending of Le Maire du palais, like that of Frédégonde et Brunehaut, falls into the typology of romantic closure advanced in the present study. Tension, only partially subsided, signals further conflict. This factor, along with the swift pace of action and dialogue, suggests a climactic structure. Simultaneously, while two of the chief actors of the current conflict have died, the enmity of the remaining characters, along with the threat of public violence, indicate that the represented cycle of unrest will repeat itself on another level; hence a circular structure.

The closure patterns unleashed in Le Maire du palais are perpetuated in Ancelot's subsequent serious dramas such as Fiesque (1824), Olga, ou l'orpheline muscovite (1828) and Élisabeth d'Angleterre (1829). In each of these works, the ending spirals forth to an uneasy, potentially explosive situation. In Olga, an outwardly harmonious tableau representing the homage of 'esclaves'--presumably serfs--to their new masters, and the embrace of the victorious usurpers, functions in the capacity of an ironic reversal. The final situation is full of despair, for the long-suffering Olga has been murdered and her lover placed under arrest (V, vii, p. 174).

To a certain extent, the rallying cry of Stendhal's Racine et Shakespeare (1823; rpt. 1825) for '[des] tragédies nationales d'un intérêt profond et durable'[34] serves as a commentary on a movement already unlaunched. His call for 'la tragédie en prose' (I, p. 80) is never fully to be realized, for it stems not only from an unsuccessful attempt to exile the firmly-entrenched norm of the verse drama from the stage, but also, possibly, from a lack of awareness of the lyrical aspects of diction. Two of his arguments, however, have still to be incorporated in practice: his plea for a language 'simple, vif, brillant de naturel, sans tirades' (I, p. 96). Although tirades are too close to the romantic spirit to be eliminated, some distance still separates the flowing diction of a Hugo from the fairly pompous language of Lemercier.

With the closure practice of Prosper Mérimée, the romantic sense of the ending moves to the Spanish Baroque era. At the same time, the formulaic 'exit address' to the spectators, already observed in the dramas of Calderón and Lope da Vega (c.f. Chapter Three) becomes, for Mérimée, a tool of ironic reversal, and the exotic settings of Le Théâtre de Clara Gazul (1825) a set of masks for socio-cultural and political satire. The first drama of the collection, Les Espagnols en Danemarck (wr. 1823), is an ironic reflection on the Bourbon régime's Spanish expedition of the same year, which transformed Paris into a swarm of patriotic enthusiasm.[35] Dealing with a historical development of 1808 (the desertion of Spanish troops under French command in Denmark in order to take part in the defense of their homeland against Napoleon), the drama's contemporary frame of reference is clear.

The 'ending' of Les Espagnols is a masterpiece of ironic undercutting. It depicts the French Resident of the military outpost and his military officer, Charles Le Blanc, in a highly unheroic role, watching helplessly through a window the departure of the Spanish troops. Their confused remarks are the height of inconsequentiality. The Resident, for instance, is outraged at Le Blanc's suggestion that he should serve as the ensignia of the nearby inn (i.e., that he should be hanged). To this the officer replies:

> Que puis-je faire? Je n'ai pas d'armes. Vous n'avez qu'un parti à prendre, c'est de demander grâce à ces dames et a ces messieurs.[36]

Dutifully, the Resident obliges: 'Ainsi finit cette comédie: excusez les fautes de l'auteur' (3ième Journée, iii, p. 72).

Several levels of meaning infuse the irony of the ending. The use of the conventional 'exit tag' of the Spanish Baroque theatre serves here to deflate the international glory of the Napoleonic and, by extension, the Restoration military conquest of Spain. In this way, it parallels the function of its Spanish source, where the ending signals the dispersal of theatrical illusion. On the other hand, a deeply serious level underlies the apparent frivolity of its literal meaning. To beg for grace from the audience, it is implied, is not as easy in the world of political usurpation as in the polite formulae of the theatre. The 'comédie,' moreover, is not yet concluded, for the tragi-comedy of political exploitation and national chauvinism continues in the world theatre. The author, who has cloaked his serious message in the buffoonery of the foregoing intrigue, does not want to be 'pardoned' for 'faults' he considers truths.

'Ironic reversal' is, in the ending of Mérimée's satirical historical drama, aimed in three directions: on the intertextual level, it mocks and reactivates the Baroque formula; on a socio-political level, it debunks and attacks French militarism under both Napoleon and the Restoration; and, on an auto-critical level, it dismisses the fantastic world of the drama as a mere series of absurdities, only to recast them from a fictional world to a grimly serious world theatre. In Mérimée's highly idiosyncratic use of the 'ironic reversal' ending, he creates a kaleidoscopic puzzle which is left to the receiver to decipher.

Thieltges' general comment on the French writer's Le Ciel et l'enfer (Theatre de Clara Gazul) may also be applied to the endings of 'Clara Gazul's' plays:

> Mit der Hereinnahme solcher aktueller Anspielungen, Espisoden, Hintergründe in den Text weitet sich auch 'Le ciel et l'enfer' zu einem komplexen Bedeutungsgefüge, dessen Wertschätzung beim Leser mit seinen, des Lesers, Fähigkeiten wächst, dieses kunstvolle Geflecht aufzulösen.[37]

In the brief preface to La Jaquerie [sic] (1828), Mérimée states simply, 'J'ai tâché de donner une idée des moeurs atroces du XIV$^{e}$ siècle, et je crois avoir plutôt adouci que rembruni les couleurs de mon tableau.'[38] The word 'tableau' is significant, for in the genre of the 'scène historique,' episodic scenes flow together to form shifting 'pictures,' connected more by theme than by intrigue. Built around the theme of the peasant revolts of 1358, La Jaquerie is composed of a succession of scenes, linked chiefly by the sporadic reappearance of central characters and by an ongoing cycle of destruction and violence. Revolution, as in Dantons Tod or Marino Faliero, is as much doomed to rot from within as to be crushed from without. Eventually, in the wake of treason and internal dissent, the peasant uprising is in shambles: 'Ma foi, l'armée est en déroute. Chacun pour soi. Les boiteux feront l'arrière-garde' (Le Jaquerie, p. 291). A cry of 'Les gendarmes du roi!' (p. 293) announces the final rout. History does not, however, come to a 'dénouement,' for the drama continues to drift forward on waves of disorder and confusion. With repeated cries of 'Sauve qui peut!' and the answering chant of 'Au Captal' . . . 'tue! tue!' action ends in a 'fuite et déroute générales' (p. 293).

6. The Theatrical Revolution.

Not only, however, a cult of individualism and a dynamic view of history create the foundations of the French Romantic drama. With Mérimée, dramatic experimentation has taken one of the relatively rare detours of the Romantic movement in France, toward the sequestered mental stage of the reading drama. Had theatrical conditions not created a favourable ambiance, this detour would have, as in England, become a general tendency.

Ironically, the nation where the 'literary' romantic drama has least access to the stage is also the nation which inspires a revolution in French acting methods. The coups de théâtre so frequent in romantic closure would, it may be conjectured, have been less prominent had a troupe of English actors, including Harriet Smithson, Kean, Kemble and Macready not performed in Paris in 1827. As Maurice Descotes emphasizes, 'les comédiens anglais exprimaient avec une effrayante vérité la lutte entre la vie et la mort. La leçon ne devait être perdue ni pour les auteurs ni pour les acteurs français.'[39] The naïve enthusiasm of the French public reflects the static, formalized declamation until now in practice:

> Il vous reste dans l'oreille une chanson, une cantilène fort différente de celle des acteurs français, mais tout aussi peu variée . . . ils font claquer les mots

> de deux ou trois lignes, et finissent par un débit
> qui tombe en mourant.[40]

An amusing footnote to this memorable theatre tour is given by Théodore Muret, whose L'Histoire par le Théâtre remains, in spite of its age, vivacious reading. The duchesse de Berry, curious to see the famous actor Kean, arrived punctually at the Théâtre-Italien. Kean, however, did not appear, until finally

> on l'arrache à ses flacons. Il s'habille, il entre en scène à moitié ivre; mais une fois là, devant la rampe et les spectateurs, l'inspiration lui vient, une sorte d'électricité le saisit, et il retrouve toute la puissance de ce talent . . . .[41]

The physical demonstrations of emotion, the intense identification of the actor with his role, to the point that he even turned his back to the public, made a great impression on French theatre-goers and players, and served eventually to exile from the stage declamatory acting, with its affected pronunciation and gestures modelled on Lekain. To the Romantics, in particular, to compare the interpreters of their dramas with Kean or Kemble remained a form of high praise.[42]

The theatre in which Romanticism finally gains a firm foothold is bored, tired of seeing the repetitions of classic pieces, and even more, of the new tragedies created according to old models. The French theatre hovers on the verge of the decadence that had already plagued the English stage of the period, and threatens to bar the romantic dramatist from the public representation of his works. The Classicist forces are in arms, supported by the government of the Restoration, as Albert Le Roy relates, although, paradoxically, the 'old guard' of the theatre were former Bonapartists and the Romantics, at this time, still

Royalists![43] The centre of this group, Antoine-Vincent Arnault, 'le modèle achevé du littérateur de l'Empire,' created tragedies from the depth of his experience as a bureaucrat.[44] One of his works 'tout frémissant d'actualité,' represents Germanicus on his deathbed, announcing that he dies 'à la fleur de mes ans,' and bidding 'Adieu, patrie, adieu!'[45] After the death of the prominent actor Talma, in particular, empty theatres reflect the lassitude of the public. The Théâtre-Français, stronghold of the 'official' drama, tries to blame its financial difficulties on the modest influx of Romanticism it has reluctantly permitted: the cost of the elaborate staging demanded by the new drama, it claims, is at the root of the problem;[46] in another reference, the new closure practice of a moderately 'romantic' drama by Soumet is blamed for the indifference of the audience:

> Car les gens de goût, les connaisseurs, ne se résignaient pas à voir le Théâtre français, sous la pression de difficultés financières, pencher peu à peu vers le nouveau répertoire. Le spectateur acceptait à la rigueur l'*Émilia* de Soumet, mais, malgre lui, détournait les yeux au cinquième acte: l'auteur exposait trop longtemps son heroïne folle aux regards du public.[47]

A basic difference, however, between the French and English dramatic conditions of the period is here visible. The French theatre, still controlled by Classicist precepts, recognizes the need for dramas which 'frappent fort.' In England, however, the Gothic mode and the melodrama, not confined, as in France, to the Boulevards, supply the need for sensation; Shakespeare adulation and the brilliant romanticized interpretations of Kemble, Kean, Siddons, and Macready, further bar the new romantic drama from the stage and cause it to labour under the weight of a paralyzing influence. In France, however, to echo again the words of Theophile Gautier, 'l'époque est favorable.'

7. Before Hernani: 'Dévoiler les catastrophes.'

'Distinguons, monsieur; il y a romantiques et romantiques,' proclaims the 'poète élégiaque' in 'Une Comédie à propos d'une tragédie' (1829), which introduces Le Dernier jour d'un condamné.[48] The poet who is satirized in this Tieckian comedy calls himself a 'moderate' romantic:

> . . . il faut se borner. Je ne suis pas de ceux qui veulent désorganiser le vers français . . . Je suis romantique, mais modéré. C'est comme pour les émotions. Je les veux douces, rêveuses, mélancoliques, mais jamais de sang, jamais d'horreurs. Voiler les catastrophes. Je sais qu'il y a des gens, des fous, des imaginations en délire. . . (III, p. 646-7).

The height of the Romantic movement in French drama is the period in which the outcome is 'unveiled.' In isolated instances, our overview to this point has already revealed the new prominence given to the dramatic ending. Paradoxically, however, the 'unveiling' of the final situation also leads to a 'veiling.' Life offers no dénouement, as Madame de Staël has pointed out in De L'Allemagne. A drama must end, but its situations may well remain shrouded in uncertainties. The awareness of the possible functions of closure expressed by Hugo in the above parody is not restricted to him alone. In practice if not always in theory, the Romantics of the post-Cromwell years explore the potentials of the ending. Already, the adroit re-application of formulaic Baroque closure in Mérimée's Théâtre de Clara Gazul has, by means of ironic reversal, ruptured the pseudo-harmony of the ending to throw open the serious political questions and criticisms couched in his work. Lemercier's Frédégonde et Brunehaut has ironically undercut the surface equilibrium of closure by suggesting that the power struggle is not yet over, while, in a more extreme treatment of the ending, Mérimée's scène historique has no outcome: rather, it depicts the scattered flight of a band of desperate peasants from incipient annihilation. From Cromwell onward, closure will become more dynamic, abrupt, and flamboyant; at the same time, it will cease to resolve the problems of character and action.

The personality of a man and of an age, claims Hugo, are at the heart of his Cromwell (1827). In the protagonist, he has chosen 'un être complexe, hétérogène, multiple, composé de tous les contraires . . . grotesque et sublime' (III, pp. 77-8); in the age, 'toute une époque de crise'; in combination, the man and the age will form a 'tableau . . . gigantesque' (p. 82). In the 'dénoument étrange' (p. 79) the action for which the preceding events have prepared fails to happen. Very little, in fact, 'happens' in Cromwell. Rather, in Hugo's attempt to create the 'gigantic tableau' at which he aims, the drama is reduced to a series of cardboard settings and poses. It is still the work of a dramatist who has not yet found his feet. The problem consists, possibly, in the effort to separate in a collage structure a set of situations and events that demand swift progression. The focus is not, as in Tieck's Genoveva, on a series of mental and emotional states, or as in Dantons Tod, on an extra-personal force (the revolution) which controls the lives of a group; rather, Cromwell deals with an individual who controls and manipulates the lives of all around him. In trying to impose the colour and pageantry of history and the tempo of an age upon a basically conventional causal-temporal sequence of actions, Hugo is at cross-purposes.

By the same token, the ending appears contrived and superimposed. Having refused the crown in the knowledge that his control is more perfect without it--although motives of self-preservation from the conspiracy of his courtiers may have contributed to the decision--Cromwell sits in regal state. The prosaic analysis of Overton reinforces the situation: 'Nos efforts n'ont servi qu'à le placer plus haut . . ./ Il inspire l'amour, il inspire l'effroi. / Il doit être content' (V, xiv, p. 430). Cromwell's unspoken wish comes as an ironic rejoinder: 'Quand donc serai-je roi?' In this way, his final discomfort, at the moment of his greatest power, functions antithetically and suggests that his self-seeking is not yet over; it has, however, been so far removed by a series of peripheral incidents from the situation to which it refers, that the effect is lost.

In this early experiment, therefore, Hugo fails to realize that form and content must be integrated. An epic drama cannot be merely a causal-temporal sequence of actions drawn out and expanded by local historical colour (c.f. Préface, p. 71) and introspective monologues. It demands an episodic or collage form. Here, however, the skeleton of a conventionally-linked intrigue is imposed, but its segments disjointed by episodes and independent sub-plots, and the character of the protagonist alone does not provide the necessary gravitational centre. By extension, the attempt at collage closure reveals the same wavering between episodic and causal-temporal linkage. In an acho of conventional closure, Overton's aside to Milton acts as a commentary on an accomplished action, and Cromwell's query as an ironic reinforcement. The ending has, however, been disjointed from the core plot by a series of incidents, such as Cromwell's encounter with his son 'Tumbledown

Dick,' as British history later nicknamed him. By extension, a central aspect of romantic closure emerges from the failure of Hugo's structural experiment: more than the other closural categories advanced in the present study, the collage is bound in with a disintegration of dramatic intrigue. It represents the final thematic stage, rather, of a series of sketches, as, for instance, in Mérimée's La Jaquerie.

Cromwell, however, is only the prelude to a quickening of dramatic experimentation among the French Romantics. The year 1828-9 sees a minor breakthrough of the movement in the theatre: the Roméo et Juliette adaptation of Vigny and Deschamps is accepted at the Théâtre Français but not performed; similarly, Dumas' Christine and Hugo's Marion de Lorme. These unsuccessful attempts are, however, followed by the staging of Dumas' Henri III et sa cour (Feb., 1829), Delavigne's Marino Faliero (May, 1829) and Vigny's Shakespeare adaptation, Le More de Venise (Oct., 1829). Each of these represents a preliminary stage to the skirmish that will culminate in February, 1830 with Hernani.

The wavering between the old and the new is enigmatically reinforced by Dumas' description of Christine à Fontainebleau (wr. 1827) as 'romantique par la forme . . . classique par le fond.'[49] The loose reference to 'form' may concern the historical content, connected by a love intrigue, and the 'fond' the preservation--although incidental--of the unities. The drama deals with the exiled Queen of Sweden who has taken refuge, along with her lover Mondaldeschi, at her chateau in Fontainebleau. Conspiracy and counter-conspiracy characterize the plot: Christine has schemed to overthrow her cousin, the present ruler of Sweden. Once this plan has been discovered, she is herself the victim of a ploy to break up her secret marriage. Believing Mondaldeschi unfaithful, she plots for his assassination. The drama concludes in a tableau of Mondaldeschi, trembling in the face of death. Already, therefore, Dumas reveals himself the master of the climactic outcome which freezes into a tableau of sustained tension.

The subsequent Henri III et sa cour creates a minor sensation. Daringly, Dumas has inserted several scandalous elements: a meeting of Catherine de Guise (wife of the sinister Duke) and her lover Saint-Mégrin in a bedroom, without, however, a physical 'outcome,' the violent behavior of the jealous duke to his wife, and the mention of so pedestrian a word as 'handkerchief' (mouchoir). The theatre, in spite of the daring nature of the performance, filled with 'des tonnerres d'applaudissements' and, in the two final acts, 'des cris de terreur' and 'un délire croissant' (M, V, pp. 104-5). The scene in which the Duc de Guise forces his wife, by squeezing her arm in his mail-clad hand, to write a letter setting up a trap for Saint-Mégrin inspired the parodic epigram closing with 'Ah! mon Dieu, tu me casses le bras.'[50] A prominent society woman, Madame Malibran, is said to have watched the two last acts hanging from her box seat, supporting herself by means of a column for fear of falling.

How much of the sensation created by Henri III derives from its 'romantic' form and content, and how much from its injection of melodrama into the 'highbrow' theatre is debatable. The outcome contains a proliferation of melodramatic devices. The Duchess, in a futile effort to rescue her lover from assassination at the hands of her husband, tells him to leap to freedom from her sixth-storey balcony. Conveniently, her devoted page (the melodramatic servant-accessory) has overheard the conversation and materializes with a length of rope. Now, however, the

Duke appears with the coup de théâtre: snarling with sadistic vengeance, he announces that the building has been surrounded by twenty hired assassins, a reception committee for page and lover as they slither to assumed freedom. In this way, the introductory motif for the ending emerges abruptly, and blocks out the previous. Yet another motif, however, compounds tension and surprise, forcing the outcome to hover in suspension. The bound but static motif of the handkerchief, previously lost in the lovers' bedroom meeting (a borrwoing from Othello), suddenly reappears:

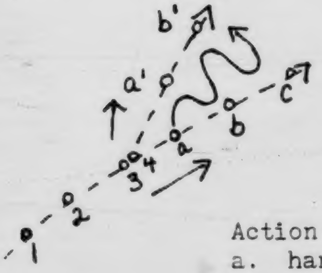
> Le Duc de Guise, jetant par la croisée le mouchoir de la duchesse de Guise.
> Eh bien, serre-lui la gorge avec ce mouchoir; la mort lui sera plus douce . . . . (OC, I [V, iii], p. 582)

To this, his wife replies with a shriek and falls unconscious, a tableau which fixes and holds her own fate in suspense. Meanwhile, a 'second stage' is performing in the imagination of the spectator. Unseen but suggested, the second simultaneous ending is in development on the street. The closing words of the Duke, the stage spectator of the 'play within a play' that he himself directs, cause shock and terror to rise to new heights. Looking through the window, he orders:

> Bien! et maintenant que nous avons fini avec le valet, occupons-nous du maître (OC I [V, iii], p. 582).

In this way, yet another climactic effect is achieved; the gruesome but inevitable ending is extended and held by means of an ongoing action.

The proliferation of dynamic motifs evoking horror and suspense thus creates a highly tense ending. A diagrammatic representation reinforces the technical ingenuity of this complex structure.



1. letter sent
2. arrival of Saint-Mégrin
3. conflict of lovers
4. attempt at escape--rope produced
5. arrival of Duke--introductory motif

Action divides into simultaneous endings:
a. handkerchief produced
b. shock and horror of wife: faints.
Motif held, immobilized in tableau.

On 'hidden' stage:
a': page strangled..
b': incipient death of lover.

(With the introductory motif (5) the action divides, represented above by the branching out of the two lines.)

(Arrows indicate maintenance of tension and action. Motif (c) also indirectly forms a tableau: the final picture, that of the Duc at the window is presumably held as the curtain falls.)

The undoing of conventional closure practice is particularly clear in the ending of Dumas' drama. On the one hand, the neo-classical demand for rapidity has been partially transformed. No introductory motif leads clearly and briefly to a final situation, followed by a sequel and commentary. Rather, retardation, complications of intrigue, and suspense abound. The outcome has been transformed into the climax. On the other, one type of rapidity, marked by a clear and swift dropping of tension, has been replaced by another, the proliferation of dynamic motifs in quick progression that maintain the spectator's undivided attention. Suspense no longer recedes; the development of the violent action, moreover, although hidden on an imaginary external stage, does not serve to veil the action, but rather to evoke yet more graphic imaginative scenes by means of suggestion.

*Henri III*, a minor drama by a Romantic whose literary status is less than first-rate, yet reveals the special ability of so-called trivial literature to exemplify structural skill. A less vivid illustration of closural innovation consists in the outcome of Delavigne's *Marino Faliero* (wr., perf. 1829). In the opinion of Le Roy, the writer 's'est efforcé seulement de reduire à des proportions conformes aux usages traditionnels de notre théâtre la pièce débordante et touffue du poète anglais.'[52] The adjective 'débordante' applied to the English rather than to the French play is curious. While the later drama is indeed trimmed of many of the long speeches of its precursor, the emotional expression is far more extreme and the intrigue wildly elaborate. Not content with the relatively passionless relationship between Angiolina and Marino, Delavigne inserts a side intrigue: not only does Sténo slander the octagenarian Doge's wife, but the latter has indeed been guilty of infidelity with Marino's nephew. The throes of remorse, coupled with guilt-ridden loyalty to the noble Marino, contribute a maudlin note to the basic conflict. The protagonist thereby also emerges as an innocent victim in his self-sacrificing determination to defend the honour of a not entirely honourable woman. By the same token, he is not the divided hero of Byron's drama. Less self-aware than his precursor, he remains naively idealistic.

The questions suggested by the dissolution and downfall of revolutions pervade the endings of both dramas. In the monologue of Act Two, equality is still Marino's goal:

> . . . une troupe grossière
> Va donc de ses lambeaux secouer la poussière,
> . . .
> Mes obscurs conjurés sont-ils moins à mes yeux?
> Des nobles à venir j'en ferai les aïeux (II, ix, p. 56).

Reality, however, wears a much different garb: the conspirators are, with two exceptions, driven by personal ambition and greed. The pure-spirited idealist, Bertram, is unable to hold his tongue, and causes the insurrection to be discovered. Similarly, Marino has unwisely revealed the secret to his wife, whose transparent lies further reveal the truth. Once the conspiracy has been revealed and the ringleaders seized, all other developments are merely consequences.

The structure of the ending is thus 'conventional,' in that a logical cause and effect relationship underlies the developments. It is, however, modelled more after a Baroque fashion by causing subsidiary plots, such as the love intrigue between Éléna and Marino's nephew, to converge in the final situation. Other devices allow for a more melodramatic maintenance of suspense and tension, as when, for instance, the populace tries in vain to batter down the locked doors of the Ducal Palace at the moment that Marino is executed. When all is over, the commoners are merely forgotten. Political questions are replaced by personal reaction. Éléna's final shriek of anguish concludes the drama, along with a tableau focused on her unconscious body.

More than Delavigne, whose treatment of the ending provides little more than a series of cheap thrills, Alfred de Vigny's Shakespeare adaptations on the eve of Hernani attest to the evolution of a new aesthetic of closure. The distance between old and new is thrown into light by recalling the Hamlet version of Ducis in 1769. Shamelessly this author announces, 'Je n'entends point l'anglais.'[53] Shakespeare is reduced to an enervated mass of repentance and Enlightenment precepts. Hamlet, a tower of kingly strength, thrusts a sword into Claudius, whose only reaction is an 'Hé bien?' followed by a 'Qui? Moi?'[54] Once the avenging hero has demonstrated 'en traits de sang la justice des dieux' (V, vii, p. 54), the next step is up to Gertrude, who admits her perfidy, instigated by the 'monstre' Claudius. To fulfill Hamlet's promise to the spectre, she dies, announcing 'J'expire: règne heureux' (V, viii, p. 55) to her son, who, in an access of feeling, bursts out with 'Que faites-vous, ma mère, en ces cruels moments?' Now only the commentary remains: Hamlet, suffering from the loss of his family, is nevertheless 'homme et roi,' who, vastly superior to Shakespeare's hero, announces, 'Je saurai vivre encor; je fais plus que mourir' (V, ix, p. 55).

Set against this background, Alfred de Vigny's Le More de Venise (1829) does indeed represent a romantic triumph over the Enlightenment spirit; by the same token, la bataille d'Hernani shrinks even further into the background as a battle after the true battle has already been fought. With more clarity and objectivity than Hugo in the 'Preface' to Cromwell, Vigny's Lettre a Lord - - - - - -, published as a preface to the 1829 printing of Le More, succinctly poses a similar question to that of Hugo:

> La scène française s'ouvrira-t-elle, ou non, a une tragédie moderne produisant: dans sa conception, un tableau large de la vie, au lieu d'un tableau

> reserré de la catastrophe d'une intrigue; --dans sa conception, des caractères, non des rôles, des scènes paisibles sans drame, mêlées à des scènes comiques et tragiques; --dans son exécution, un style familier, comique, tragique, et parfois épique?[55]

This brief definition of the romantic drama serves to tighten the links between French and European romantic dramaturgy. It summarizes the basic tenets of the romantic view of dramatic form and content: in short, the drama does not merely follow an intrigue from beginning to end; rather, it shows or 'paints.' Character is not merely a sub-function of the intrigue, but its portrayal an end in itself; the content blends tragedy, comedy and even epic, using intimate, simple diction. At the core of this definition lies a new comcept of closure. More than any other prominent romantic dramatist, Vigny recognizes that conventional dramatic form moves from a distinct point of departure to an equally distinct point of arrival. When the 'tableau of life' is the object, the 'catastrophe' no longer offers a turning-point after which the dramatic action sinks into static resolution. The unresolved ending is integral to the revival of the 'world theatre' in Romanticism.

Vigny realizes, moreover, that the difference between the old drama and the new does not consist simply in the rejection of the unities. It lies more in the substitution of a 'corps' with an 'esprit' (I, p. 347). From a form united by its 'action extérieure,' the movement is now toward a diffuse form 'immobile et languissant au dehors, mesquin et indécis en action . . . mais agité, devoré intérieurement par un prodigieux travail intellectuel, une fermentation presque sans exemple dans l'histoire' (I, p. 347). The concept underlying this drama 'immobile,' 'indécis' but 'agité,' 'dévoré intérieurement,' is that of non-completion. The romantic drama is that of an unending process; hence, possibly, Vigny's contempt for the stage, which converts the drama into a machine. Once the wheels of this mechanism have ceased turning, Vigny writes, the movement correspondingly stops 'tout à coup dans la solitude' (I, p. 331). Here another central question is indirectly posed: to what extent does the development of the reading drama and the movement away from the stage consciously or unconsciously reflect the new attitude toward the ending? If the ending merely marks the beginning of a new conflict to be restaged within the mind of the receiver, it is conceivable that the medium of the stage loses its importance, and merely causes a detour in the transmission of a plurivocal text from sender to receiver.

More clearly than any other Romantic, Vigny connects the aesthetics of the romantic drama with the structures and functions of closure, and surprisingly, the contemporary public, in its concern for the isolated aspects of diction (c.f. 'mouchoir'[56]) disregards then as now a central innovation. In the system which has just been replaced, argues Vigny, the 'catastrophe' and 'dénouement' are already prepared when the curtain is drawn (I, p. 337). In both the French and the foreign drama, this leads to a paucity of scenes and developments, false retardations, and finally, the main action accomplished, to an 'hâte d'en finir,' (I, p. 337). At this point--and in an examination of closure, where great transformations seem to be accomplished virtually unnoticed, one is inclined to let forth a sigh of relief--Vigny delineates the structure and content of the traditional ending.

> . . . il a fallu, à chaque tragédie, une sorte de tour d'adresse prodigieux, et une foule de ruses pour déguiser la misère à laquelle ils se condamnaient;

> c'était chercher à employer et à étendre pour se couvrir le dernier lambeau d'une pourpre gaspillée et perdue (I, p. 337).

This, Vigny comments, is not life but the artifice of art. In a reaffirmation of the consciousness of reality which attests to the major role of Romanticism as a major step in the direction of Realism, he maintains that

> le poète dramatique . . . montrera la destinée enveloppant ses victimes dans des noeuds aussi larges, aussi multipliés, aussi inextricables que ce où se tordent Laocoön et ses deux fils . . . l'art sera tout semblable à la vie, et dans la vie une action principale entraîne autour d'elle un tourbillon de faits nécessaires et innombrables (I, p. 337).

What then, asks Vigny, is the basic modification of closure accomplished by the new aesthetic, as opposed to the 'ex-système de tragédie?' Once, he argues, 'une maison entière dans le sens des anciens (domus),' from the highest to the lowest, was occupied exclusively and equally with the same problem from the beginning to the end of the drama. The members of the group, in the words of Hazlitt, all turned their faces in a unique direction, and spoke a language 'capable de bannir à la fois les caractères vrais, comme grossiers' (I, p. 338). The new drama, like the exceptional works of genius from the old, has begun to combine familiar language ('le récitatif') with lyricism ('le chant,' p. 343); at the same time, 'la liberté . . . multiplie a l'infini les difficultés du choix et ôte tous les points d'appui' (I, p. 348). The modern drama, like the ending it evolves toward, moves forward 'vers un but, hélas! inconnu?' (I, p. 349).

The structure and function of closure in Vigny's More de Venise have already formed part of our introductory example. One aspect, however, requires emphasis: Vigny, in his belief that even the translation of works exhibiting the original genius at which the Romantic aims must be altered in accordance with the age and the translator's personality, has modified Shakespeare's ending. Translation is, in his view, adaptation or the art of renewal. While, on the one hand, he decries the classicist principle of rapidity in closure, the swift alternation of 'récitatif' and 'chant,' along with the abrupt development of intrigue, bestow an impression of speed alien to the French classicist practice. The choice of a Shakespearean text is natural, for here also the final situation develops in a series of static and dynamic motifs; the major departure of Vigny, as our previous comparison has concluded, lies in the deletion of the commentary and in the transformation of Othello's suicide into a surprise development that terminates the play with a dynamic motif; for this reason, it has here been designated a 'climactic' ending.

In the light of these developments both in theory and in practice, it becomes amply clear that the French romantic drama, which has accomplished the 'secondary revolution' in dramatic closure that the present study aims to demonstrate, some years later than the German and English movement, is well established before the première of Hernani. This development leaves us with two questions: why did an earlier drama, such as Le More de Venise, not steal the spotlight, and why in particular did the closural innovations so explicitly formulated by Vigny go by virtually unnoticed? The probable answer to the first question is bound in with the second. Hugo is the great performer of the Romantic era in France, more or less like Byron in England. With the force of his self-advertisement and of the rhetoric of his dramatic practice, he is able to seize the public imagination in a way that the more sedate but also more erudite Vigny fails to do. The closural phenomenon, by extension, is overshadowed by the largely vague, general formulation of romantic theory, in France as elsewhere in Europe. It evolves, moreover, as an extension or by-product of a drama which aims at the presentation of huge tableaux, a spiralling intrigue, and a multi-faceted approach to character. Dramatic criticism of the Romantic age, furthermore, is not given to the side-by-side study of old and new texts, while the dramatist himself is possibly the least objective regarding his own work.

## 8. Hernani and after: Victor Hugo and the 'Big Bang' ending.

'La mise en scène est magnifigue,' the Courrier des theatres announced in its review of the February, 1830 première of Hernani; Gil Blas maintained that the work was 'monté avec un luxe asiatique.'[57] These comments underline a central difference between French romantic drama and its manifestations in the German states or England. Unlike Tieck, the Schlegels, Lamb and Hazlitt, the French romantics, apart from Vigny and Musset, enthusiastically court the stage and the public, and the richness of scenic props may have much to do with their popularity. Even without these aids, however, the ending of Hernani is both striking and spectacular.

Again, the structure of the romantic drama demands a careful use of the terms 'ending' or 'outcome.' Hernani has two endings, the first, at the close of Act IV, which parallels the positive closure of the melodrama, and the second, in Act V, the product of a suspended introductory motif. If indeed the final act were removed, the play would be melodrama, complete with the triumph of virtue and the suppression of vice, resulting as a sudden and rationally inexplicable twist of the intrigue. As Alexander Lacey summarizes, 'the Romantic writers in their earlier and more "literary" works especially, aimed to achieve "tragedy" by substituting for the optimistic formula of melodrama a pessimistic formula of their own, partly because of the prevailing pessimism of the age, partly, perhaps, from the necessity of competing with classical tragedy.'[58] The means used to achieve the ending, Lacey goes on to note, are really melodramatic; i.e., the reliance on arbitrary, accidental elements. Although his view is basically hostile, and glosses over deeper-lying aesthetic and historical factors that determine the ending, his delineation yet centres upon a possible reason for the predominance of climactic closure in the French romantic drama.

The 'beginning of the ending' occurs early in Hernani. The bandit-hero, his life saved by the strict honour code of Don Ruy Gomez, who has unwillingly concealed him during the Crown Prince's raid, determines to repay the debt by offering up his own life to Gomez:

> Écoute. Prends ce cor. --Quoi qu'il puisse advenir,
> Quand tu voudras, seigneur, quel que soit le lieu, l'heure,
> S'il te passe à l'esprit qu'il est temps que je meure,
> Viens, sonne de ce cor, et ne prends d'autres soins.
> (III III, vii , p. 993)

In this way, Hernani's fate is, on the one hand, of his own making, an articulation of the death-wish that haunts him throughout the drama, and on the other, a seemingly wilful product of chance. This scene, however, functions as an introductory motif which is temporarily suspended until its reactivation in the closing act.

From the third to the fourth act, the linkage is tenuous. Suddenly the spectator is transported to the tomb of Charlemagne in the crypt of Aix-la-Chapelle, where a maddening succession of developments takes place: first, from nowhere, the Duke, Don Carlos, appears, and while waiting for the conspirators who, he has been informed, threaten his life, he undergoes a vision of grandeur at the sight of the Emperor's sepulchre. Next come the conspirators, Hernani and Ruy Gomez among them, until, surrounded by the Duke's soldiers, their plans are foiled. As if on cue, the Electors now enter to proclaim Don Carlos the new emperor. Miraculously, the frivolous fop transforms himself into a gracious monarch, and the supposed bandit proves to be a noble. With honours poured forth on all shoulders by a gallant king, and Doña Sol restored to her lover Hernani, the act closes with a gigantic procession around the King, praying at the foot of Charlemagne's tomb. Only one note ruptures the harmony of this preliminary ending: Don Ruy, overcome by jealousy and hatred, says _à part_: 'Mais, comme lui, je n'ai point pardonné!' (III IV, iv, p. 1016).

The fifth Act, _La Noce_, moves directly to the sequel of the fourth--the wedding of Hernani and Dona Sol. Here, in particular, the loosening of the dramatic ending is visible. The lengthy first scene contributes little to the action; rather, it is a giant tableau composed of the wedding guests' fleeting scraps of conversation. Subtly, however, it creates an atmosphere of hallucination verging on the surreal. In essense, the scene is a demonstration of Hugo's blending of contrasts with its 'jets d'eau dans l'ombre . . . les faîtes gothiques et arabes du palais illuminé . . . Des masques, des dominos, épars, isolés, ou groupés,' (III, V, p. 1017 ). In this collage-like shifting of figures, words, and darkened forms against an illuminated background, one diabolic shape abruptly transforms the atmosphere from one of frenzied gaiety into one of horror: 'ce spectre, qui, debout contre une balustrade,/ De son domino noir tâchait la marcarade' (V, i, p. 1020). Asked if he has come from hell, he replies in a sepulchral voice, 'Non, . . . j'y vais' (p. 1023). Unlike the death-figure in Poe's Hop-Frog or Masque of the Red Death (1842), this harbinger of doom has an identity: he is Ruy Gomez, and his mission is to demand the life Hernani has previously promised him.

The final scenes of the drama become, in essence, a symphonic poem in dialogue, and the interweaving of lyric and symbol creates an operatic effect. Peter Conrad's study of Romantic Opera and Literary Form maintains that the music of the opera has an effect of 'levitation, of absolute disjunction between the guilty worldly character and its spiritual emanation . . . . As they are jolted from a material to an ideal existence, from person to spirit, the characters acquire new identities, or else exchange identities between themselves.'[59] This, he argues, stems from the dissolution of stable characterization into 'shifting states of consciousness.'[60] This movement parallels, according to him, the nineteenth century development of the novel in preference to the drama, whose form confines characters to rational acts and calculated behavior. Had Conrad, however, included a study of dramatic form among the Romantics, his conclusion would have been modified. 'The equivalence between music and words which Wagner's theory of opera as drama assumes is a false compact,' Conrad states. He does not take into account that the romantic drama poses such an equivalence, and accomplishes it in the closing scenes of Hernani. The ending here rests not so much on verbal meaning as on the evocative nature of sound and symbol.

The development of the outcome takes the form of a collage-system of lyrical flights abruptly shattered by sinister shocks. From the evocation of joy and darkness ('Vois-tu bien, c'est la joie! . . ./ Viens voir la belle nuit' V, ii, p. 1025 ) the verse makes a subtle transition to menace: 'Ce silence est trop noir, ce calme est trop profond' (p. 1026). Irony is interfused: the sound of a horn answers Doña Sol's capricious wish for music, and, little knowing its significance, she exlaims, 'Un ange a compris ma pensée,--/ Ton bon ange sans doute?' In a further touch of irony, she compares the sound of the horn to that of Hernani's voice--an added reminder that his death-bound fate has not left him. The fourth scene repeats the process of restored and shattered harmony. No sooner does the hero venture to say, 'Mais tout se tait . . . / Si je m'étais trompé!' than the 'masque en domino noir' (V, iv, p. 1029) appears. Tension and animosity rise once more with the threats and pleas of Doña Sol, only to fall once more into the relative calm of the final 'transmutation.' Here again, however, the dialogue's rhythms rise and intensify:

> Calme-toi. Je suis mieux. --Vers des clartés nouvelles
> Nous allons toute à l'heure ensemble ouvrir nos ailes.
> Partons d'un vol égal vers un monde meilleur.
> Un baiser seulement, un baiser! (V, vi, p. 1037).

The duet of union gives way, in turn, to fragmentary snatches of 'une voix qui s'éteint.' The closing motif serves once more to shatter the silence and immobility with a climactic outburst of action from Don Ruy: '"Morte! --Oh! je suis damné." Il se tue' (V, vi, p. 1039).

Although the drama Hernani is not the grand departure from tradition that theatrical history would have it seem, it is yet a strikingly original work. For the first time, possibly, within the French romantic drama, closure does indeed become an expression of shifting moods and feelings which bring home the intensity of the closing developments. The ending has become truely 'poetic' in its suggestion of states within the consciousness of the lovers. Leit-motifs are interwoven in a synaesthetic progression to form the moving energy of the lyrical dialogue. On a verbal, symbolic level, Hugo accomplishes in the ending of Hernani what Wagner later aims to do in the 'musical drama' of the opera. In this respect, Hernani is a major stepping-stone in the development of both drama and music. The breakdown of traditional dramatic form, and in particular, the structure of closure, make this welding of musical and poetic form possible. While the progressive movement of the opera from the form and content of drama to those of the novel may be borne out by the derivation of the libretti, no study of music and literature can afford to bypass, as does that of Conrad, the immense impact of innovation in the romantic drama.

Closure by means of contrasts, constant motion and no final stability emerges from Hernani. Without the final 'jolt,' i.e., the abrupt suicide of Ruy Gomez, the ending would indeed have moved toward stasis. The lovers' Liebestod would have signified transcendence in the well-worn motif of the never-ending bridal night celebrated in the grave. Hugo does not, however, allow his drama to close without a semi-ironic rupturing of harmony. In a sense, the final motif, which combines with the previous to create a collage and a climactic ending, serves to relativise the preceding development. Abruptly, the receiver is jolted forth from the never-never land of soaring transcendence to be reminded once more of the agony, fury and vengeance of the antagonist, a process which contains elements of ironic reversal and affirms the pervasiveness of romantic irony.

The final 'scream of consciousness,' or rather, the scream of the tormented consciousness, is a recurring element in Hugolian closure. His Marion de Lorme (wr. 1829, perf. 1831), for instance, concludes with a cry and a tableau which simultaneously represent the unalleviated suffering of the final situation, and reflect symbolically on the 'man of blood's' tyranny over a social class.

Marion de Lorme combines two major themes in the theatre of Hugo: the political-historical and the individual-sentimental. The drama does not merely recount the unhappy love story of a Des Grieux-like figure enamoured of a former courtesan; rather, Didier and Marion are made the representatives of the people, controlled and victimized by a weak monarchy headed by an ecclesiastic 'executioner.' The history of the reign of Louis XIII and the Cardinal Richelieu is, however, moved forward into the context of the nineteenth century.

Hugo's preface salutes the drama's production as a triumph of the Revolution of 1830. He now regards, in the fitful movements of his political opinions, the ousting of the restored monarchy as a triumph of liberty (III, 'Préface,' p. 728-9). Paradoxically, no similarly optimistic political vision emerges from the ending of Marion de Lorme. The drama remains, he states, basically the same as before, on the occasion of its condemnation by the censor (p. 727). Like the Marino Faliero versions of Byron and Delavigne, revolution and social change are hemmed in by power. In this way, Romantic closure among the French is even more despairing than in some German dramas, where half-hearted attempts are at least made to prefigure a transcendent release from worldly oppression (c.f. Tieck's Genoveva and Arnim's Der Auerhahn).

The plot of the drama, like that of Hernani, is chaotic. In the figure of the 'pure prostitute,' whose way of life contrasts sharply with her inner inclinations, Hugo avails himself of a ready-made divided character and of a host of cape-and-sword situations. Marion, in love with an innocent young man, wants to end the 'beau roman' of her love intrigues with the 'dénouement si mince' of love à la province (I, i, p. 737). Already in the first scene, however, a 'dénouement' of a far different order is pending, although no inherent logic of the dramatic development prepares it. Again, however, the inner fatality of the hero, 'funeste et maudit' (I, ii, p. 741), has marked him for disaster. Immediately fate begins to operate in Didier's encounter with a rival suitor, Saverny. The commencement of the second act merely tightens its clutches by presenting first the edict of Richelieu that all participants in duels shall henceforth be executed, and next, by throwing hero and rival (Saverny) face to face. The duel over and Didier imprisoned, the action has advanced as far as it does. From this point onward, the drama may well be viewed as a drawn-out 'ending,' composed of futile efforts to avert the final situation.

This romantic drama cannot, however, be viewed from the conventional vantage-point of developing action. The outward conflict between the remorseless laws of the state and the individual forms only one level of the text; more important is the path traced by the reactions and interpersonal relationships of the major characters. The third act, for instance, is a comedy--the riotous game of the disguised Saverny to convince Richelieu's henchman, Laffemas, that he has actually died in the preceding duel. Suddenly, however, the arrival of a group of players, among them Marion and the escaped Didier, changes the frivolous comedy to one of deadly earnest. The drama of illusion--Le Cid is to be performed--forces the circle of disguised characters to reveal their true identities. In a Shakespearean twist, the play is a mousetrap, not for consciences, but for causing the actors to 'step forth from their roles' and to be brought to justice. In short, the third act moves in a circle, from escape, flight and disguise, to renewed imprisonment, and in this way, along with the second, serves as a doubled introductory motif.

Act IV continues this circular structure. Again, an attempt is made, by seeking audience with the King, to evade the outcome; again, however, a false hope gives way to a huis clos. Significantly, however, Marion's prospects of freedom for Didier are not this time foiled in the same act, but in the fifth, subtitled Le Cardinal. Richelieu, the absent stage-director (an ironic reversal, possibly, of the 'God figure' of the Baroque theatre), never appears until the closing scene; his power is nevertheless inescapable, and in the machinations of the villain Laffemas, his 'earthy representative,' his presence is amply felt. At the beginning of the fifth act, Marion arrives at the prison with Didier's pardon from the King, only to find that an order from the Cardinal has rescinded the first. In despair, she exclaims, 'la dernière espérance est éteinte!' (V, ii, p. 835). The circle, however, rotates yet a third time, for, in her most desperate effort, Marion assents to sell herself to Laffemas in exchange for Didier's escape. In this way, yet another circle is prepared to swing back once more to its point of origin. Marion, 'après s'être épurée à cette chaste flamme' (p. 836) now 'peut retomber si bas qu'elle aille jusqu'à vous!'

The final closing of the fatal circle is, however, suspended by the random conversation of Didier and Saverny, which eventually turns to a meditation on death. In contrast to Hernani, love here supplies no antidote to the solitude of death; ironically, death itself is of little consequence, serving merely as a couch 'plus dure encore' than that of the prison, 'mais vous dormirez bien' (V, iii, p. 841). That 'l'âme immortelle sort sans tâche et sans blessure' (p. 842) from the trappings of death is, by the proliferation of these trappings, rendered weak, unconvincing. Upon the entry of Marion, however, the last attempt at escape fails, sealed by Didier's scornful refusal.

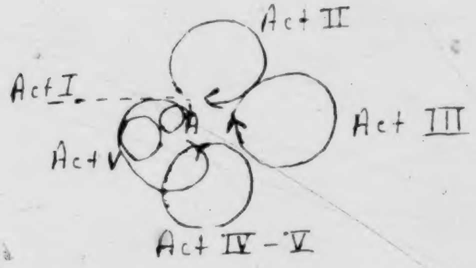
Like Hernani, Marion de Lorme does not end on a note of reconciliation. Rather, the lovers' final forgiveness, reinforced by an Hernani-like duet of mutual love and regret, gives way to the formation of a last desperate attempt at evasion. Marion's renewed hope for 'grâce' from the cardinal, who arrives in a scarlet chaise in the midst of a spectacular procession, is echoed and reversed by the words, 'Pas de grâce!' (V, vii, p. 857) which emerge from the curtained windows.

The closing scene, as a type of posthumous outcome, symbolically reinforces the violence of the final situation. Tableaux, hallucinatory vision, and frenzied outcries combine, and culminate in Marion's final gesture:

> Marion, debout, échevelée, et montrant la litière au peuple
> Regardez tous! Voilà l'homme rouge qui passe!
> Elle tombe sur le pavé.

As in Hernani, the symbolic portrayal of a situation has replaced both 'showing' and 'telling.' Marion's outcry evokes an imaginative tableau of a sinister blood-red executioner, an anti-God presiding over a world-scaffold: an image which recalls that of the closing tableaux in Dantons Tod.

'Dites-moi seulement,/ Si c'est la fin, madame, ou le commencement' (Annexe 8,[V, v] p. 877), says Didier to Marion, in an alternate version of the fifth act. These words, a mark of his jealousy at her liaison with Laffemas, may also serve as an auto-commentary on the outcome. Not only does the ending combine climactic, collage, and tableau structures, but also, it is a component of the series of circles which, as our analysis has argued, characterizes the form of the drama. The schematic representation of Marion de Lorme is, according to the present reading, as follows:



Each circle represents an attempt to escape the impending final situation (A); the arrow closing each circle refers to the re-establishment of the introductory motif--death sentence. The spiralling of circles in Act V suggests the increasingly frenetic nature of the attempts to change the situation.

It is thus evident that traditional delineations of form cannot be applied to a large number of romantic dramas. Although the modification of Tomaševskij's motif delineation, as advanced in the present study, still allows us to arrive at a thematic summary of situations and to identify the outcome within the system of the drama, this also does not provide a means of differentiating the interaction of structures. This observation affirms once more that the romantic drama is a 'law unto itself.' The structures and functions of the ending, however, still adhere to the general typologies of romantic closure advanced by the present study.

With Le Roi s'amuse (wr., perf. 1832) and Lucrèce Borgia (wr. 1832; perf. 1833), Hugo develops the juxtaposition of the 'grotesque' and the 'sublime.' In the earlier drama, moral deformity is mirrored in the physical, while in the later, it is joined with physical beauty. The grotesquely hideous court jester Triboulet yet hides under his repulsive exterior 'le sentiment le plus pur qui soit donné à l'homme, le sentiment paternel,' while Lucrèce Borgia maintains, in spite of her 'âme difforme,' a purity of maternal love.

Reversal is at the core of Le Roi s'amuse. As a reversal of the tragedy, the King is the 'Fool'--and unlike Lear, his folly is neither temporary nor tragic--and the Fool is the tragic hero. In a reversal of the melodrama, the 'honest father' is dishonest and the pure daughter is raped; the happy outcome, a surprise product of the fool figure's making, here becomes tragic, and deprives the fool himself of the one person he values. In a serious context, therefore, Le Roi s'amuse presents a verkehrte Welt. Even more irony of situation lies in the idea that the King's 'procurer' or pimp is now made the victim of his own ruse. Nevertheless, no tragic justice lies in this turning of the tables, for the romantic drama has undone the clearly differentiated situations of the tragedy and, in this instance, of the melodrama.

The ending of Le Roi s'amuse is therefore, in one sense, an ironic reversal. The outcome which Triboulet has so carefully planned to wreak vengeance upon his daughter's royal seducer is, once unveiled, a debilitating blow to himself. The network of reversals is perpetuated in the diction and developments of the final scene. Irony is part of the verbal play of Triboulet's monologue as he triumphantly tows the sack, ostensibly containing his royal prey, to a bridge of the Seine:

> Maintenant, monde, regarde-moi.
> Ceci, c'est un bouffon, et ceci, c'est un roi!--
> (V, iii, p. 611)

Indirectly, he asserts that the positions are now reversed, for he, the Fool, has outwitted the King; reality will, however, prove him doubly the Fool, while the King will still remain the King. In the 'lutte du diable au fort' Triboulet believes, 'le faible est le vainqueur' (V, iii, p. 612). On one level, the 'faible' has indeed won, for Blanche has succeeded in her aim to save the King; on yet another, he, in his imagined power, will himself strike the final blow that will kill his daughter, at present unconscious in the sack.

The pseudo-ending, represented by the father gloating over his sack, is reversed by means of a second introductory motif. Here an interesting variation is accomplished through the use of leit-motif. Francis I, issuing from a house of ill repute, sings his accustomed song, 'Souvent femme varie . . . ,' to which Triboulet asks, 'Quelle voix! Quoi?/ Illusions des nuits, vous jouez-vous de moi?' (V, iii, p. 613). The 'illusion' brings him to reality.

At this point, the pathos of Hugo's ending slides into bathos. Amid thundering self-recriminations and even some touching words from Blanche--who, in spite of her uncomfortable surroundings, is still able to talk--the outcome is, from sheer force of rhetoric, an extended chain of exclamations. A final touch of irony provides a self-consciously manipulated contrast: the surgeon, coldly explaining that death from suffocation has been caused by a wound on the left side, is cut short by a final 'bang': 'J'ai tué mon enfant! j'ai tué mon enfant!' as the father falls on the pavement. The alternate ending proposed by Hugo is even more extreme: accosted by a magistrate and accused of murder, Triboulet is only able to repeat 'J'ai tué mon enfant!' (p. 618), n.).

From Le Roi s'amuse onward, Hugo tends to make use of the same recipes of closure that are drawn out at such length in his drama of 1832. Lucrèce Borgia, for instance, closes with a dynamic motif--Gennaro's matricide--followed by revelation: 'Gennaro! je suis ta mère!' (III, iii, p. 725). Marie Tudor (1833) incorporates a swift, action-charged ending. For the first time in the theatre of Hugo, moreover, the outcome is positive: the lovers Jane and Gilbert are united in a 'reunion' tableau, and the death of Marie Tudor's calculating lover Fabiano is announced in a magnificent 'coup de théâtre.' Curiously, the manuscript contains a different ending, wherein Gilbert is the victim and Fabiano the victor. This last-minute change may be justified by a number of reasons. Anne Ubersfeld suggests that Hugo, 'pris par la signification politique de la pièce, . . . a choisi la solution optimiste libérale.'[61] To this, one may well ask why a similar choice was not made for Ruy Blas. A more tenable reason is put forth by the editors of the Édition Chronologique: 'D'abord, l'incompatibilité de la duplicité de Fabiani avec le succès de son masque. Ensuite et surtout l'absence du thème de la fatalité dans la nature de l'amour de Gilbert et dans les réactions de Jane à la scène précédente' (IV, p. 850). In addition, it may be argued that, by giving Simon Renard the last word, 'J'ai sauvé la reine et l'Angleterre,' Hugo is able to incorporate yet another of his dearly-loved 'big bang' revelations. At the same time, the character of Simon obviously fascinates him: 'Personnage ambigu, calculateur, froid, presque inhumain, utilisant comme un simple instrument l'homme du peuple Gilbert, et tout à la fois serviteur éfficace d'une cause juste et populaire' (Editorial note, IV, p. 850). Both elements, the one-line revelation and the ambiguous personality of the final speaker, reflect dominant tendencies in Hugo's closure, as exemplified in Cromwell, Marion de Lorme, and Lucrece Borgia.

'Dénouement absurdissime,' was the comment of Charles Maurice in Le Courrier des Theatres on Angélo, tyran de Padoue (wr., perf. 1835). In a similar vein La Chronique de Paris and L'Artiste ridicule the prevalence of poison in the endings of modern dramas: 'Autrefois, on servait le poison dramatique en coupe, aujourd 'hui, on le sert en fiole. Que dis-je, en fiole, en cruche!'[62] The 'fiole-folie' also prompts Theophile Gautier to decry the presence of standard motifs that bring the drama of the period to an artificial halt, dispensing reward and punishment. In a general context, he argues that the dramatist should be willing to allow chance, and not self-conscious manipulation to determine the completion or non-completion of the outcome:

> Il faudrait qu'une part plus large fût laissée au hasard dans les oeuvres dramatiques. Le hasard est le grand arrangeur, ou si vous l'aimez mieux, le grand dérangeur des existences humaines. Le dénouement en rapport, si impérieusement exigé au théâtre, n'existe guère dans la comédie du mode; mille choses commencent et ne finissent pas. Avec la rigueur des combinaisons actuelles, on fait de la stratégie et non du drame, des parties d'échecs et non des scènes . . . . Essayons un peu, à la fin d'une comédie, de ne pas marier M. Oscar à mademoiselle Zinzoline; à la fin d'un drame, de ne pas faire tuer M. le héros; supprimez le poignard de ferblanc et la fiole d'acide prussique,

> et le public, éffarouché d'une telle audace, n'aura
> pas de clefs assez forcés, de projectiles assez crus,
> pour vous en punir.[63]

The final twist of irony in Gautier's critical commentary throws light upon the set of tensions dividing theory and practice. While the 'sophisticated' tastes of the dramatist and the reviewer of the 'art' drama, along with the underlying ethos of Romanticism, may dictate that *deus ex machina* tactics in arriving at a resolved ending should be abandoned, the popular *Erwartungshorizont*, gauged by audience response, pulls in a different direction. The poisonous exit-motif is as convenient for the nineteenth-century as the final miracle to the Baroque theatre.

Although, therefore, the means of death in *Angélo* is already a well-tried trick in the theatre of Hugo and his literary and sub-literary contemporaries, it yet exhibits another application of climactic closure, and forms part of the macrotext of romantic drama. Sharply contrasting characters and situations, as Hugo intimates in his preface, lie at the core of this 'action toute résultante du coeur' (V, p. 267). The two women Tisbe and Catarina represent in turn alienation from the norms of society, and adherence to an accepted social setting. Both, however, suffer, the one from contempt, and the other from despotism. At the root of this misery lie two forces, male domination and an absurd social system. The interaction and conflict of the two women, counter-balanced by the two central male figures ('le mari et l'amant,' p. 268), are therefore complicated by extra-personal socio-historical factors; in this sense, the represented action is merely a metonymous particle of a much larger situation that transcends time and place:

'Mêler dans cette oeuvre . . . le passé dans le présent et le présent dans le passé, à l'élément historique' (p. 268). Hugo's delineation of the scope of his drama may be taken yet one step further. Not only does the central conflict serve as the hub of a wheel which sends out links to a much larger set of personal and social tensions, but also, this all-embracing circle contracts and is in effect condensed within a symbol. Homodei, 'éternel ennemi de tout ce qui est en haut; changeant de forme selon le temps et le lieu, mais au fond toujours le même' (p. 268) is the presiding spirit of darkness, the negative 'Providence' of the world theatre. By the same token, the inner conflict of the love intrigue can be resolved only on a highly limited level; the larger circle of oppression, the abuse of power, and restrictive social norms continues to rotate, presided over by a simultaneously sub-human and super-human fate, symbolized by 'Homo et dei'--a conjunction of 'man' and 'gods,' ambiguously suggesting, in its syntax, either a nominative plural ('deus'--'dei') or a genitive singular (dei). In this way, one possible reading of the drama, suggested in the authorial preface, intimates that no definitive outcome exists. While the inter-personal conflict may come to an end, an existential fatalism encloses the world of the drama in a circular structure.

The preface to Angelo, Tyran de Padoue can only, however, provide a tentative formulation of the outcome. As a statement of authorial intention, written in retrospect, it is structurally separate from the dramatic text, and should not replace or predetermine an independent reading. One test for circular structure lies, however, in the juxtaposition of the 'first' and the 'last.' The opening scene of Angelo contains *in nuce* the ending. The 'Première Journée' serves thematically as 'La Clef' (subtitle, V, p. 271) of the ending. The setting is carnivalesque: as at the opening of the final act of Hernani, the frenzied sounds, motions, and partially darkened, partially illuminated shapes of people move against a background of light and darkness. While the gathering is not a 'masque,' the absence of costumes does not reflect an absence of disguise. Society itself wears many masks: as Angelo describes to La Tisbe, 'il y a une chose grande et terrible et pleine de ténèbres: il y a Venise' (lère Jour., pp. 275-6). Political intrigues, spies, interrogations and mysterious murders lurk at every corner. Identities and situations are therefore not what they seem: 'penché sur cette fournaise ardente que vous nommez Padoue, le visage toujours couvert d'un masque' (lère J., i, p. 275), deceit and subterfuge are the order of the day. Rodolfo, for instance, is not La Tisbe's brother, but the man she loves; he, in turn, conceals the secret of his love for another woman, whose name, residence and marital status are unknown to him. Only one person, Homodei, is omniscient, but he also hides under the guise of a fool and will not impart the sources of his knowledge. His role, moreover, is merely that of a 'metteur en scene,' the force who sets the latent conflict into motion. As a symbol of a malevolent existential presence, the conjunction of the demonic in man and society, his presence is powerful. Hugo's problem is, however, that he tries to involve the symbol in the melodramatic intrigue that ensues, to give him a role and function beyond the symbolic; eventually, however, this attempt proves cumbersome, and Homodei is conveniently wounded and killed (3 ème J., 1, i p. 315). A potential component of the circular structure is thus dropped.

The ending emerges from a tight succession of coincidences, melodramatic trappings (e.g., keys, secret doors, sleeping draughts that masquerade as poisons) and is, in itself, a game of disguise followed by sudden revelation, the death of La Tisbe, and impending flight. As the intrigue hurtles from one situation to another, the outcome is merely lost in the proliferation of action. The accomplishment of Tisbe's ruse, however, to dispense temporarily with the tyrant Angelo and to simulate Catarina's death, prepares the final situation. The 'Troisième Partie' of the 'Troisième Journee' serves, therefore, as the ending.

Like the beginning, the final scenes take place at night ('La nuit est très noire, 3 ème J., [3, i], p. 334). Not only is the setting theatrical, for Tisbe is surrounded by the trappings of her profession, but also, an elaborate play of disguise and hidden identities has been prepared. The supposedly dead Catarina has been abducted to the actress's home, the horses stand ready for flight, and the heroine has, by means of her self-sacrificing but self-destructive final gesture, planned her death: 'mourir de telle façon qu'il lui fut impossible d'arracher ensuite mon souvenir de son âme, que mon ombre restât toujours . . . entre toutes les autres femmes et lui!' (3, ii, p. 335). Indirectly, the 'page noir' also provides a feeble echo of Homodei.

The 'play within the play' runs true to its script. Rodolfo, infuriated at what he believes has been Tisbe's murder of Catarina, stabs his former mistress; no sooner has the final blow fallen than a voice calls out, 'Où suis-je? Rodolfo!' (p. 340). At the dying woman's revelation that Catarina has been saved 'Par moi, pour toi,' Rodolfo can say only 'Catarina! . . . Tisbe!' before he freezes in a tableau of stunned immobility, 'l'oeil fixé sur la Tisbe expirante,' (p. 341). Although Tisbe's parting words reflect forgiveness and good will ('Je te bénis'), hatred and revenge are closely allied. The spectator or reader is left with an overwhelming question: will Rodofo have the strength to flee, or is he, as his utterance of the two women's names and his motionless stance implies, shattered, torn between remorse and a consciousness that the image of Tisbe will forever block out that of Catarina?

Thematically, therefore, an attempt at a circular ending is suggested by the parallelism of disguise and concealment in the opening and concluding scenes. This is not, however, consistently rendered. The drama which has started with a succession of collage-like scenes has turned into a melodramatic intrigue propelled by chance, coincidence, and mechanical tricks. By extension, the outcome is primarily climactic (lacking, however, the unequivocally 'happy' ending of the melodrama), reinforced by a tableau which indecisively suspends the future course of action.

An auxiliary problem is posed by the form. Unlike Hugo's previous dramas, Angelo, Tyran de Padoue is written in prose. It is divided, moreover, into 'Journées' rather than acts. While the first 'Journée' consists of only one part, the second is subdivided into two, and the third, into three. These factors inevitably affect the function of the ending within the larger system of the text. Of least importance, it appears, is the change from verse to prose. The dialogue takes on, it is true, a certain fluency; monologues and coups de théâtre tend to slip by almost imperceptibly. Less exclamatory than verse dialogue, the major statements of feeling no longer have the prominence of an operatic aria. By extension, intrigue, gesture and scenic devices would, it may be conjectured, prvail over verbal elements in a stage performance. The division into 'Journées,' moreover, also indicates a strengthened awareness of intrigue in its evocation of the form of the Spanish Baroque drama. A spiralling and successive complication of intrigue is also suggested by the corresponding increase in the number of 'parts.' In this way, the climactic structure of the outcome is reinforced. Like a ball released on a steep incline, the intrigue similarly gathers momentum before it crashes, metaphorically speaking, against a wall of sustained tension.

The sense of the 'big bang' ending is indeed tied in with the theory and practice of Hugo. The opera libretto, La Esmeralda (1836), written at the request of Mlle. Louise Bertin and set to music by so impressive a pair of names as Berlioz and Liszt, is the work of a poet ill at ease with the exigences of the genre (c.f. 'Présentation' by Arnaud Laster, Éd. Chron. V, pp. 487-91); the scenario ends, however, with a sudden rescue, the hero's unexpected death from a reopened wound, and the heartbroken Esmeralda's correspondingly abrupt death. The alternate manuscript of the 'Scénario primitif' suggests two other endings: one in which the villain priest Claude, gloating over the gipsy-woman's execution, is suddenly pushed from a balustrade by Quasimodo, who is left in a tableau, gazing at the dead and repeating, 'Oh! tout ce que j'ai aimé!' (V, p. 538); and the other, which ends with Quasimodo toppling the priest into an abyss.

The note on the performance of Ruy Blas further reinforces the importance of the dynamic motif in Hugo's theory and practice of closure: 'Il faut à l'acteur qui aborde ce rôle [i.e., that of Don Salluste]

. . . une manière tranquille, sinistre et grande, avec deux explosions terribles, l'une au commencement, l'autre à la fin' (V, p. 776). This 'fin' however, evoked equally explosive reactions from the dramatic press. Apart from the scandalous depiction of a liaison between a queen and a lackey ('Situation on ne peut plus scabreuse'[64]) and the divisions in the roles and social status of the characters ('Comment des personnages, si différents, si contraires, et qui ne se touchent que comme des extrêmes peuvent-ils se trouver ensemble et agir logiquement et vraisemblablement l'un sur l'autre?'[65]), the despair of the work, exemplified by the outcome, is open to attack in an age which appears to lean more and more toward ideals of Classicist equilibrium. Ubersfeld notes that 'lescritiques opposent au grotesque de Ruy Blas l'idealisation classique et renvoient Hugo à Corneille et Racine.'[66] The commentary of Jules Janin, in particular, reveals that while the structures of romantic closure may have much in common with those of the popular theatre, the underlying function and ethos are distinct from both Classicist models and from a contemporary desire for stability: 'C'est toujours la même puissance implacable, fatale, sans regard, sans oreille, sans entrailles, presque sans voix . . . une espèce de force inerte . . . .'[67] A great division thus exists between the predominant vision of the Romantics and that of the public Erwartungshorizont. As Annie Ubersfeld suggests, Hugo is faced with a major problem: 'Comment combler le fosse qui se creuse entre son public et lui?'[68] An additional question may be asked: in 1838, when Ruy Blas is performed, has a French parallel to the German Biedermeier and Victorian domestic-nationalist tendencies started to make itself felt, and is a corresponding change in closure imminent?

The ending of Ruy Blas still exhibits, however, many of the central attributes of romantic closure. It illustrates a paradox of the romantic drive for total vision. The aims of the drama are voiced in universal terms:

> In effet, au delà de cette barrière de feu qu'on appelle le rampe du théâtre, et qui sépare le monde réel du monde idéal, créer et faire vivre, dans les conditions combinées de l'art et de la nature, des caractères . . . du choc de ces caractères et de ces passions avec les grandes lois providentielles, faire sortir la vie humaine . . . (V, 'Preface' to Ruy Blas, p. 670).

A component of this 'vie humaine' is, as Hugo's insistence on the historical basis of his work confirms, a philosophy of history (p. 673), particularly of the decline and fall of monarchies. The work ends, however, merely with a 'choc des caractères et des passions.' Defeat is inherent. As Ruy Blas articulates, even without with Queen's pardon, life would have been impossible: 'Je ne pouvais plus vivre,' (V, iv, p. 774). His personal history will remain a blank spot in the history of the age: 'Fuyez d'ici!/ --Tout restera secret.--Je meurs.' Paradoxically, the drama closes abruptly with the last joyful but ironic 'Merci!' of the hero, and the same silence that follows his death also envelops the future of the historical age. A vision of continuity has disappeared from the dramatic ending.

Two reasons may be advanced to explain this silence, which falls as climactically as the final 'shocks' of the action and dialogue. First, it could be argued that Hugo, while claiming to combine the personal and the universal, allows the 'exaggerated ego' of which F. L. Lucas accuses the Romantic, the sense of the individual that 'grows as bloated as an ant-queen among her crawling subjects; fertile, but grotesque,' to swallow all awareness of larger questions.[69] This leads, in our view, to a misconception of romantic closure. The second possibility is more convincing: while the life and inter-personal involvements of individuals possess a built-in 'closure,' i.e., the termination of life, history lacks such a final stop. Hence the state of Spain in the declining days of a demoralized monarchical system is merely left in chaos. The last 'whimper,' to adapt the words of T. S. Eliot, extends far beyond the final 'bang' of the represented action. In a tongue-in-cheek manner, therefore, we could conclude that silence itself is an expression of the circular structure of the ending. Political chaos, in its slow decline, constitutes the portion of the 'non-ending' that is flung forth to the receiver, to be restaged in the mental theatre that he carries away from the reading or performance of the represented action. Herein may lie yet another reason for the negative choruses of contemporary French reviewers. The romantic sense of the ending is, for an audience steeped in the certainties of Classicism, still far ahead of its time.

Another paradox of the ending of Ruy Blas lies in the opposition between 'people' and 'superhero.' At least in rhetoric a proponent of the people, Hugo yet allows Ruy Blas, the upstart commoner with a noble heart but a lackey's garb, to submit to a ringing defeat. Although the hero dies triumphant, in the sense that the Queen has reiterated her love and pronounced his true name, any power he has exercised on a political level has been under a false identify, and has been accomplished as a type of 'superman aria' rather than as a larger popular movement. This again does not necessarily indicate the 'insincerity' which, as Henri Peyre demonstrates, often underlies the mask of romantic sincerity, but may constitute another of the 'non-endings' that the dramatist leaves with the receiver.[70]

The unresolved aspects of the ending form, therefore, a continuing play beyond the play. The ending, in this sense, takes up the function of the 'introductory motif.' The inner structure of the drama, however, demands thematic division, in spite of the abundance of action, intrigue, and counter-intrigue. As Annie Ubersfeld points out, the themes of disguise (masking) and discovery (unmasking) are integral to the dramatic development.[71] Paradoxically, disguise, or the taking up of a false identity, is the first step in the hero's self-realisation, a necessary framework of falsehood from which his strength and genius can emerge. Masking is thus a form of unmasking of the protagonist's latent grandeur. His new-found power and love are nevertheless highly vulnerable. The extent to which inner worth is dependant upon outward deception is illustrated by adroit role-reversal: the 'lackey,' in the presence of his master, resumes his servant role abruptly at the height of his power. The arrival of Don César, whose identity Ruy Blas has 'borrowed,' reinforces the extent to which personal identity and status are products of the accident of birth, and, at the same time, evanescent, prone to usurpation. The ending represents the shedding of the last tatters of disquise.

In the second scene of the final act, a suspended motif--a letter that Ruy Blas has formerly been tricked into writing--summons the Queen to his retreat. Two sets of 'unmaskings' signal the incipient introductory motif and the counteracting force. First Don Sallustre 'ôte son masque' (V, iii, p. 768). The revelation of first his identity, and then his ploy to force the Queen and her ignoble lover to flight enables him to say, 'Vous êtes dans ma main' (p. 769). Only another unveiling of identify can block the consequences of this motif. When Ruy Blas throws off his cloak, therefore, and announces, 'Je m'appelle Ruy Blas, et je suis un laquais!' (p. 770), self-revelation is the introductory motif which leads to self-assertion and the establishment of the final situation.

Once more, however, the ending is an aggregate of dynamic and static motifs, and may thus be designated 'collage.' Self-assertion entails first an act of self-protection and vengeance in the killing of Don Salluste. This action alone marks a closural break with convention, for, contrary to the rules of polite conduct, Ruy Blas attacks an unarmed man with his own weapon. One of the ambiguities of the ending thus consists in this detail: is the hero's unchivalrous action that of a self-appointed executioner, or is it the blunder of a lackey?

The revelation of the truth does not, at the same time, result in the restitution of honour and social standing. Words cannot suffice to explain the hero's statement, 'Je suis honnête au fond' (V, iv, p. 773). His explanation trails off to, 'La faute est consommée!/ C'est égal, voyez-vous, je vous ai bien aimée' (p. 773). Only by dropping the final disguise, that of life itself, can the protagonist achieve both a renewed avowal of love and the ensured safety of the Queen's honour. Paradoxically, renewed disguise consists in the words 'Tout restera secret.' Whether death, however, actually bridges the gap that has arisen between the lovers is doubtful. To the Queen's 'Ruy Blas!'--a signal that the hero 's true self has been accepted--his answer is, 'Merci!' The suspicion remains that pity has at least in part overtaken love ('Vivant, par son amour, mourant, par sa pitié,' p. 774). That the repetition of an ignoble name should inspire gratitude only reinforces the social inequalities of the world theatre, inequalities resolved only in the rejection of life.

A certain danger naturally lies in overlooking the conventional aspects of the ending in a desire to demonstrate the originality of a new movement. For this reason, counter-arguments function as a necessary test. If we take, for instance, Chahine's comment in her La Dramaturgie de Victor Hugo, we find an affirmation of the ending's traditional characteristics: 'philosophiquement, le dénouement tragique du drame hugolien consacre le retour à l'unité, à la réintégration.'[72] That this is an overstatement in its general context is clear from the closing anguish of Marion de Lorme and the stunned but tense immobility of the survivors in Lucrèce Borgia and Angelo, Tyran de Padoue. Only in the melodramatic happy ending of Marie Tudor can this assessment be seen to apply. Here again, however, the abrupt emergence of the final situation, and the absence of a retrospective commentary to set a seal of permanence and stability on the final situation forces the depicted 'reintegration' to hinge upon a sudden coup de théâtre. Only in Hernani and Ruy Blas could Chahine's view be justified. Both dramas, however, portray in the outcome a self-willed annihilation which has little to do with the concepts of unity or harmony. The aged study of Souriau points out one major departure from the Classicist ending: 'Il semble que quelque chose soit brisé dans ces âmes débiles [i.e., the 'faiblesse des caractères' he has earlier argued] et ce quelque chose, c'est la volonté: ils ne savent pas vouloir.'[73] The dramatic conflict between passion and duty at the centre of Corneille's tragedies, Souriau notes, is lacking in the work of Hugo.

At the base of the Romantic's inability to withstand obstacles there lies more than his so-called 'weakness' of character--a judgement which, in its imposition of extra-textual moralistic judgement, reveals more about the ethos of the critic than that of the drama. The protagonist of Le Cid or even of Hamlet--a tragedy which hinges upon the hero's inability to act at the demanded time--is, unlike Hernani or Ruy Blas, not an invader in a universe where effective action is impossible. Both Rodrigue and Hamlet have indeed some chance of imposing their individual will upon a potentially tragic situation. In other words, they are still integrated with the larger concerns of society; birth and character do not preclude their success. Similarly, the tragic romance of Romeo and Juliette results from the unfortunate combination of circumstances rather than from a permanent impasse. The roots of disaster go much deeper in Hernani and Ruy Blas: so deep, in fact, that struggle is from the beginning rendered futile. 'Fate' is not merely the combination of external forces which happen to seize upon a weakness of character for their accomplishment; rather, external forces activate the internal fate that travels with the protagonist at all times. Hernani is the social alien, the man marked by death. Ruy Blas's social integration depends on the flimsiness of a false identity, just as his passion for the Queen is only rendered fruitful by the disguise which also removes its integrity. Only initial integration, therefore, can lead to a possibility of final reintegration. By the same token, the so-called tragic endings of Hugo's dramas are a reaffirmation of the heroes' paralyzed will.

Rainer Warning's perceptive study of Ruy Blas focuses upon an unconventional aspect of the ending: 'Denn dort, wo die Anagnorisis statthat (V, 2) endet das Geschehen, auf das der Irrtum bezogen ist, nicht mit dem Untergang des Helden, sondern mit dem gerechten Tod des Schürken.'[74] At this point, the resolution is melodramatic. By extension, the death of Ruy Blas is not a necessary result of the intrigue; at the same time, the hero has been so drawn in by the network of deceit that his integrity cannot be salvaged. As in the outcome of Shelley's Cenci, no ethical distinction separates the plight of the 'good' from that of the 'bad.' While Racine's Phedre dies from necessity, having morally forfeited the right to live, and Hamlet, as a consequence of his delayed action, Ruy Blas's death is that of a lackey with the soul of a noble, consumed by a passion that cannot be realised.

In one respect, Warning's analysis, like that of Chahine, may be misleading:

> Nun läßt Hugo Ruy Blas in der Tat als getröstet sterben und Hernani mit Dona Sol in den Himmel der Erlösten eingehen. Aber was hier christlich uberhöht wird, ist die christliche Todsünde des Selbstmords, und dieser Selbstmord beendet ein Martyrium, das nicht dem Glauben, sondern der Liebe galt: was als christliche Pseudotragik sich darbietet, ist in Wahrheit materielle Häresie.[75]

While a Christian-based heaven of reconciliation may indeed be suggested in Hernani, the text of Ruy Blas contains no Christian undertones. While the hero does, more or less as a rhetorical gesture, ask God to permit 'que ce pauvre laquais bénisse cette reine' (V, iv, p. 774), death is not combined with the idea of afterlife. Heretical or not, transcendence is irrelevant. Only the 'here and now' of death is of interest to the hero: that he dies 'consoled by pity,' that his true name is accepted and spoken. Otherwise, the ending presents us only with a laconic 'Je ne pouvais plus vivre' (p. 774). With more awareness of structure, Annie Ubersfeld argues convincingly that 'la tragédie de la chute du puissant est en fait chez Hugo la tragédie de l'intégration manquée.'[76]

## 9. Romantic Drama and its popular modifications: Alexandre Dumas père

The foregoing examination of closure in the dramas of Victor Hugo has covered the years 1830-8, which also mark the period of the most intense activity of the French romantic theatre. Les Burgraves (1843) separates itself chronologically and, in part, thematically, from Hugo's previous work, and will be discussed in a forthcoming section. It is now necessary to go back a number of years and to consider other works which contribute to the dense dramatic output of the period.

Already with the closing words of Dumas' Henri III et sa cour, 'Bien! et maintenant que nous avons fini avec le valet, occupons-nous du maître' (TC I IV, v , p. 582), we have observed the abrupt but energetic flouish of the ending. Even more than Hugo, Alexandre Dumas père is a master of climactic closure. 'Elle me résistait, je l'ai assassinée!' (TC II V, iv , p. 295) represents, possibly, the most striking 'one-liner' in the French romantic theatre.

Antony (wr. 1830; perf. 1831), a daring portrait of contemporary life which depicts adultery in the setting of the Parisian salon, created a succès de scandale: played one hundred thirty-one consecutive times in Paris, it also travelled from one end of France to the other.[77] With his characteristic verve and generosity, Théophile Gautier described the première:

> C'était une agitation, un tumulte, une effervescense dont on se ferait difficilement une idée aujourd'hui . . . . Ce que fut la soirée, aucune exagération ne saurait le rendre. La salle était vraiment en délire; on applaudissant, on sanglotait, on pleurait, on criait. La passion brûlante de le pièce avait incendié tous les coeurs.[78]

The famous closing words of the drama, as the author-critic notes, breathe forth 'l'amour le plus chevalresque, le plus profond et le plus sublime.'[79]

The peregrination of Antony from the Théâtre-Français, where it met only delays and less than inspired acting, to the Théâtre Porte Saint Martin, with Marie Dorval and Fernand Bocage in the leading roles, is indicative of a redirection of the romantic drama. In moving from the temple of high art to the boulevards, 'les romantiques partaient à la recherche de ces interprètes qui seraient enfin, croyaient-ils, de vrais collaborteurs.'[80] The milieu of the popular theatre fuses with the romantic drama, now a fugitive from official culture.

That this relocation is fruitful for the development of the new drama emerges from Dumas' Mémoires: 'L'absence des traditions scolastiques, l'habitude de jouer du drame, une certaine sympathie des acteurs pour leurs rôles . . . tout cela réhabilitait peu à peu le pauve Antony à mes propres yeux' (MM IV, p. 210, 2e série). By extension, the new structures and functions of closure, also divorced from the 'tradition scolastique,' can only profit from a more sympathetic setting.

Like Hugo's Hernani with its bandit-hero, Marion de Lorme and Angelo, with their heroines permanently exiled from society, and Ruy Blas, where the unmasking of the self in a socially acceptable form demands the wearing of a morally suspect disguise, Antony also deals with characters in a permanent 'in-between' state. Integration with society is merely a pretence, for society itself is founded on pretence. Discreet philandering is not only socially acceptable, but, to reapply Hamlet's words, a 'custom honoured by observance.' The 'breach' consists in the injection of feeling, in allowing an adulterous passion so to overtake one's life and social conduct that it can no longer be masked by conventional roles. In this typological precursor of Anna Karenina, fatality is built into the development of the initial situation.

As in the major works of a great number of Romantics, the question of fate is, however, more complex than that of the movement of the intrigue. Built-in disaster stems as much from character as from the overstepping of social norms. This factor alone results in a major ambiguity of the ending. The murder-suicide of Adèle is more than a mere variation of the Virginius motif. From one viewpoint, it is in fact an anti-Virginius, for the outcome cloaks lost virtue in a sham of protesting innocence. From another, it is also an expression of the death-wish underlying the character of Antony and the self-corroding passion of the lovers. 'Oh! si tu l'avais vu triste et sévère au milieu de ces jeunes fous . . . . Et, lorsqu'il serait parti, tu te serais dit la première: "C'est qu'il était impossible qu'il restât"' (I, ii, p. 207), says Adèle of her former lover before their reunion. An exile by the accidents of birth as well as by character, Antony is a hero who cannot remain within the confines of existence. In the force of his destructive superiority, he also drags Adèle to her spiritual and phsyical disintegration.

No sooner has Antony, in a convenient accident which smacks of melodrama, flung himself beneath Adèle's runaway horses, paradoxically to save the life he later ends, than the motion of the drama resembles that of a runaway carriage. Once more, however, as in a host of romantic dramas, action, in the form of decision and counter-decision, is virtually absent. Two pinnacles occur: the hero's semi-forcible seduction of the heroine, and the final coincidence of the absent husband's arrival and the self-willed murder. Otherwise, 'action' is an illusion created by rhetoric and emotional conflict.

At the same time, symbol contributes, through the insertion of static but bound motifs, a dimension of fatality. Antony's near death in the aftermath of the carriage episode functions as a symbolic prefiguration of the ending. As the hero lies unconscious, Adèle remarks his dagger: 'J'ignorais que ce fût son pommeau qui lui servît de cachet et de devise. . . . Je le reconnais bien à ces idées d'amour et de mort constamment mêlées . . .' (I, iv, p. 214). The motto is that of undying devotion: 'Adesso e sempre.' When, therefore, Antony flings his dagger to the feet of Colonel d'Hervey in the final gesture of the drama, a symbol of love, death, and undying devotion is reactivated, and destows a circular linkage to the beginning and the ending.

The romantic drama rarely, however, reintroduces a motif without, in some way, injecting a paradoxical twist. The ideas of 'adesso e sempre,' now and forever, have been negated, at least on a temporal plane, by death; if, moreover, the motto is to suggest eternal devotion in a Christian afterlife, this is rendered dubious by the preceding exchange:

> Ant. Comprends-tu? . . . une mort douce comme un sommeil, une mort plus heureuse que toute notre vie . . . . Puis, qui sait? Par pitié, peut-être jettera-t-on nos corps dans le même tombeau.

> Adèle. Oh! oui, cette mort avec toi, l'éternité
> dans tes bras . . . . Oh! ce serait le ciel,
> si ma mémoire pouvait mourir avec moi . . .
> je dois mourir seule.
> (V, ii, p. 289)

Death _together_ is thus the passport to eternal union; the solitary death of Adele results from a calculated ploy to save her reputation and honour in the eyes of her husband and child. The ending is, therefore, a contradiction of transcendent harmony. Ostensibly, Antony's closing gesture is one of self-sacrifice. It is, however, also a sign of conformity to the demands of a society he despises, and performed only because of his inability to abduct Adele before the fatal knock at the bedroom door.

The outcome is fraught with equivocal elements. Syntactically, its structure in the 'grammar' of the represented action is conjunctive, for it leads to the expectation of further action. At the same time, its semantic functions are ambiguous: it may represent a prospect of unity in death, for Antony's own death at the hands of the husband seems to be pending; or it may stem from the rebel's paradoxical desire to conform to the society he rejects; it may voice defeat in the face of character and circumstance; or it may be simply a gallant gesture calculated to end the drama with _éclat_.

Other elements emerge more clearly from the ending. A dynamic set of motifs--the entry of the husband, the surrender of the dagger, and the avowal of murder as a consequence of attempted rape--abruptly form the final situation. The consequences are, however, absent. Rather, motion is suspended, frozen into immobility with the falling of the curtain. On the stage and in the mind of the reader, visual elements predominate. Although the manuscript includes no stage directions here, a precipitous curtain is suggested. The climactic ending thus fuses with the tableau.

After Dumas' two major successes, Henri III and Antony, his sizeable dramatic output wavers increasingly toward melodrama, a progression that can be traced through his closure practice. Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux (1831) ends climactically, in spite of its classicist adherance to the unity of time, and depicts merely the shock and confusion ensuing from a murder-suicide and the flight of the villain-hero. An interesting footnote reaffirms the oblivion of Dumas' reviewers to the differences between classicist and romantic closure. Since Yaqoub is used as a vengeful woman's instrument of murder, Dumas was accused of having pilfered the 'dénouement' of Racine's Andromaque.[81] The comparison is indeed far-fetched when we turn to the final words of Charles VII. As Yaqoub flees he cries behind him:

> Vous, qui, nés sur cette terre,
> Portez commes des chiens la chaîne héréditaire
> Demeurez en hurlant près du sépulchre ouvert:
> Pour Yaqoub . . .
> Il est libre! . . . et retourne au desert!
> (I [V, ii], p. 461)

Even the partial order of the ending of Andromaque is absent here. As the Arab gallops forth to his natural desert habitat, flinging his curses to the 'civilization' he leaves behind, a tableau of astonished dismay forms among the spectators.

Dumas' Richard Darlington (perf. 1831) demonstrates, like Antony, that the romantic drama is not necessarily historical. The setting is contemporary, and traces the rise, progressive corruption, and fall of a British politician. Richard Darlington is, like Antony, of bastard parentage; unlike his jaded predecessor, however, ambition blinds him to all other passions.

Whatever Richard Darlington may lack on a poetic level--and the vehicle of prose, with its tersely simple statements, here provides merely a framework to allow the actor to insert his gestures and rhetorical fireworks--finds its compensation in the swift movement of the intrigue. In the drama's focus on the brilliant career of a man of mystery, its use of doubles (e.g., the evil genius Thomson and the omnipresent but unacknowledged father of the hero, Mawbray, represent different aspects of Darlington's character), and its subordination of personality to overriding passion, the drama remains romantic. At the same time, the circular linkage between the prologue and the ending, and the climactic horror motifs of the outcome are the products of mechanical planning. The popularized romantic drama here takes on contrived elements.

The circular structure joining the beginning and the ending of the drama also join the birth and fall of the villain-hero. In the dark of night, a masked traveller arrives at the home of a country doctor, bearing a woman in the last stages of labour. She is the daughter of the Marquis Da Sylva, while he, it is hinted, is wealthy but low-born. No sooner has Richard entered the world than the irate father of the abducted woman bursts into the house. To his daughter's protest that her lover is 'brave et généreux' (II, [Prol., vii], p. 17), the father replies with a lightning-bolt revelation: 'Cet homme . . . C'est le bourreau!' (p. 19). The action then freezes on a tableau of shock and horror, to be recommenced after an interval of twenty-six years in the first act.

Similarly, the ending drives the final situation back to the beginning by means of a swift revelation. Richard, in the basest crime of his political ascent and moral degradation, has just murdered his first wife, Jenny, in order to marry the adoptive daughter of his natural mother. The marriage contract is about to be signed when Mawbrey, who has witnessed the murder, accomplishes a sudden reversal. He is, he announces, the same man who, disguised and under another name, abducted the mother of Richard's prospective wife. Pointing to the hero, he announces, 'Viola mon fils!' (II [III, xvii], p. 123). Da Sylva pursues:

> Donc, vous êtes . . . ?
> Maw.: Le Bourreau! (p. 123)

With this repetition of the closing words and the shock of the prologue, the curtain falls. Suspense is nevertheless maintained, for Mawbrey has yet to exercise his role of 'bourreau' by revealing his son's crime.

An aggregate of dynamic motifs, the ending of Richard Darlington may be isolated only with difficulty. The conflict between Richard's ambitions and Mawbrey's attempts to prevent further wrong-doing provides the thematic linkage in a series of wildly extravagant coincidences. The last stage of the conflict, which leads directly to the revelation in the ending, serves therefore as the introductory motif. In an endeavour to dissuade Richard from a clandestine marriage, Mawbrey arranges to transport the lawful wife, Jenny, to the house where the contract is to be signed. Now, however, a new motif enters the ending of the romantic drama. To this point in our study, we have seen 'big bang' revelations, daggers, swords, conflagration, ecstatic leaps into graves, burning pyres, bodies of water, and precipaces, swoonings, handkerchief strangulation, piercing screams, and 'fiole folie.' The new motif could facetiously be labelled 'defenestration.' As Descotes recounts, a problem arose during the rehearsals of Richard Darlinton: how to cause Jenny to disappear. Pressed to resolve the difficulty, Dumas replied, 'Eh! f_____ la par la fenêtre.' His words were taken literally: in the penultimate scene, Richard tosses Jenny from a veranda window overlooking a steep cliff. 'De cette surprenante trouvaille, Frédérick [Lemaître] allait faire la scène la plus spectaculaire de tout son répertoire.'[82] Legouve's account of Lemaître's acting in this famous scene reveals to what extent the climactic ending is a product of the stage as well as of the text: Lemaître arranged, he writes, to have a green light turned upon his face; to create the illusion of a spectral apparition, the actress playing the role of Jenny was instructed to drop her thin veil in her terrified flight. With an evil laugh, the intrepid Lemaître tucked the pseudo-spectre in his pocket, whence it dangled as he received his future father-in-law.[83] Mademoiselle Noblet, in the role of the murdered wife, was said to have screamed in actual fright at Lemaître's brutal visage.[84]

Once in motion, the dramatic machine of Dumas becomes an assembly-line venture. The theatrical sensation of 1832, La Tour de Nesle, written in collaboration with Gaillardet, raises the problem of genre, a problem that has received little critical attention. In this play, the dividing line between the romantic drama and the melodrama has become particularly thin; at the same time, certain elements already point beyond both genres. Significantly, Dumas' edition refers to the play as a 'drame en cinq actes et en neuf tableaux' (II, p. 223), a designation which still claims some adherance to 'high' culture.

The ending, while it accomplishes the just punishment of the crimes of Marguerite de Bourgogne and Buridan, mitigates no grief, and merely imposes a token form of justice on a society seething with corruption. More than in Richard Darlinton, the final motif snaps shut the neat circle of the intrigue, whereby the criminal becomes his own executioner. The order composed by Buridan and signed by the King, which is to have disposed of his rival for Marguerite's favours, merely justifies his own arrest and that of the Queen. In a particularly daring episode, the Queen, who has in her hightly orgies had intercourse with her two long-lost sons by Buridan, discovers herself guilty of both incest and infanticide.

The question remains whether this ending may be designated 'romantic,' 'melodramtic,' or neither. While the sudden emergence of the final situation is typical of both genres, the black-and-white distinction between the virtuous and the evil, as exemplified by the dramas of Pixérécourt, is absent at the same time, the very neatness of the 'checkmate' finale, and the almost mathematical logic which governs the coincidence of motifs, tend to play down its romantic elements. Typically Nebout, in an eagerness to use 'melodrama' as a denigratory epithet--and in his view the French romantic drama is of little value--claims that 'Buridan est l'idéal du héros de mélodrame.'[85] The moral universe sketched by Pixérécourt's Essai sur le mélodrame does not enter into his concept of the genre.

Several choices ensue: to claim that La Tour de Nesle is a later development of the melodrama and, by extension, that its ending is a variant upon melodramatic closure; that it suggests a form of popularized romantic drama with especially prominent horror motifs, or that neither label applies. In our view, both the drama and its closural structure and content are transitional. While the ending still preserves the abruptness of climactic structure, the tightly-linked intrigue and the relative lack of tension once the final situation is established suggest a movement beyond romantic closure. At the same time, the semi-playful world of the melodrama as represented by the early work of Pixerécourt, Caigniez and Ducange has been rendered shrilly meancing.

The recent study of James Smith Allen hypothesizes that popularly-diffused Romanticism is more a 'mode of expression' than an 'intellectual sensibility,' and that its emphasis is on form rather than content. The study of shifts in closural practice highlights a problem that results from this diffusion: at what point does mere form, divorced from intellectual sensibility, separate itself from a movement which depends more for its identity on a distinctive ethos than on structural norms?

## 10. Closure in 'minor' dramas.

Already with Henri III, Antony, and Marie Tudor, the romantic drama hovers on the edge of the popular, non-literary genres. La Tour de Nesle and the subsequent productions of Dumas' dramatic machine, such as Don Juan de Maraña (perf. 1836), mark a definitive movement in this direction. As in the German and English drama of the romantic period, literary history, based on the 'star system,' represents a small portion of the work of the age. Reference to the titles contained in Gerard de Nerval's La Vie du théâtre, a compendium of his theatre reviews from 1835-51, and to Théophile Gautier's massive Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans, with reviews beginning in 1837, offers a reminder that our present view of the so-called pinnacle of the romantic drama is highly partial. For this reason, closure in a number of 'minor' dramas, i.e., works that do not form part of the better-known 'literary' canon, will supplement the study of major developments from 1830-40.

The distinctive elements of romantic closure are highlighted by comparison with contemporary works of related genres. The drame bourgeois, for instance, still thrives in the popular theatre. Ancelot, whose works preceding 1830 have supplied instances of closural innovation, moves increasingly to the themes and forms heralded by Diderot, Beaumarchais and Mercier. His Un Divorce, performed at the Théâtre National du Vaudeville (1831) reveals that the iconoclastic social vision of Dumas and Hugo is far from widespread. The plaint of Émeline, a runaway wife who has made love the centre of her existence ('Édouard, si nous cessions de nous aimer, que nous resterait-il? Nous sommes isolés sur la terre, et nous ne pouvons demander à l'avenir que de l'amour') and her lover's reply ('L'amour peut-il remplir seul toute une existence?'[86]) is a typological antiphone to the love-duet of Hernani. The ending reflects, in structure and in content, this opposition. As in the romantic drama or the melodrama, shock and surprise are central to the establishment of the final situation. A 'dear John' letter, announcing that Édouard is bound for the wars, unable to continue his life of social ostracism at the side of a divorced woman, causes Émeline to swoon, crying 'Et moi . . . seule . . . seule pour toujours!' (xxix, p. 50). The tableau of the heroine, 'accablée sur un siège' does not, however, conclude the drama. Péters and Maria, the virtuously-married couple who has served throughout the drama as a foil to the adulterous pair, articulate the moral. Although their dialogue is exclamatory, accompanied by sighs, emotion-laden gazes, the holding of hands, and a rapturous embrace, it functions as a commentary. Péters' question, 'Et tu voudrais me quitter?' and Maria's 'Jamais!' (p. 50) reinforce a social norm of fidelity and restraint.

The structure of the ending of this bourgeois drama resembles that of romantic closure in its exclamatory nature, its interspersal of dialogue and gesture, and sudden developments. Its ethos is, however, distinct, and the articulation of feeling serves a moral purpose.

Melodramatic closure has kept pace with that of the romantic drama, to the degree that the initial distinctions between the endings of the two genres begin to blur. Pixérécourt has supplied several instances of innovative closure in the early years covered by our study. The immensely popular work of Caigniez and D'Aubigny, La Pie voleuse, ou la servante de Palaiseau, 'mélodrame historique' (perf. 1815), still reveals, in its closing commentary, the moralistic tone of the ending: 'Allons, mes amis, v'nez tous à la ferme m'aider a célébrer le triomphe d'Annette et le bonheur de Richard; venez raisonner le verre en main sur le danger du'il y a de se fier aux apparences.'[87] Although the song-and-dance finale of the early melodrama has disappeared, the ending is yet one of felicity and moral order.

As early as 1820, however, a different type of ending may be found among the works designated 'melodramas.' Le Vampire: Mélodrame en trois actes (anon.) incorporates a climactic ending and a tableau. Rutwen (sic), the vampire villain, forestalled by the clock in his endeavour to procure yet another bride-victim, disappears amid thunder, spectres, an avenging angel, lightning, and a final 'pluie de feu.'[88] While the melodramatic defeat of the villain is thus accomplished, he yet remains the centre of attention, surrounded by a rapt audience.

Our reference to the 'defenestration' motif of Dumas' Richard Darlington has already revealed an instance of co-operative playwriting in the process of acting. An earlier example of this phenomenon and the way it modifies closure is supplied by the melodrama L'Auberge des adrets (1824), a creation of Antier, Saint-Amand and Polyanthe, and, not least in importance, the actor Frederick Lemaître. By transforming the villain Robert Macaire into first a 'gredin cynique et boufon,' and later, a rogue, 'gaiment immorale,' who confounds the gendarmes in his pursuit, Frederick accomplished, in the course of his acting, a basic redirection of the text. He imposed, in effect, an 'ironic reversal' upon the moralistic ending of the melodrama.[89] When in 1832 the work was reintroduced into the repertoire of the Théâtre Porte Saint Martin, a tableau replaced the third act. The ironic reversal was carried even farther: in a mockery of melodramatic closure, the tears and sentiment of the original ending were transformed into a moving scene of Macaire and his cohorts exchanging fine sentiments as they await death. Finally, 'ils s'endorment l'un et l'autre et le Paradis des Voleurs se dévoile à leurs yeux.'[90] The French typological counterpart of the Zauberposse of Raimund and Nestroy has thus celebrated its illegitimate birth.

The history of Robert Macaire does not end with this heavenly vision. Inspired by his success at improvisation, Lemaître unlaunched (and the term 'unlaunching' is indeed true of the balloon-episode in the ending!) a new melodrama, Robert Macaire, pièce en quatre actes et six tableaux (perf. 1834), in joint authorship with Saint-Amand and

and Antier. In a parody of the melodramatic ending's sudden changes of setting, a tableau ('Le sixième Tableau') succeeds the final scene. Both 'endings,' the incipient one and its aftermath, are climactic. Not only the closure effects of the melodrama are parodied, but also, the dialogue, in another form of ironic reveral, pokes fun at the 'family reunion' tableau of the drame bourgeois. The gendarmes are pounding at the doors of the bandits' retreat, where Macaire is sequestred with his cohorts. Flippantly the hero says, 'Ouvrez . . . il est impossible que ce tableau de famille ne les attendrisse pas.'[91] In this suggestion that a group of scoundrels in their 'home' form the equivalent of the sentimental family groupings of the drame bourgeois, the structures and content of closure are debunked. A possible echo of Merimee's scène historique, La Jaquerie, now ensues. Cries of 'Eh bien! sauve qui peut! . . . Sauvons-nous tous!' (p. 302) accompany the sudden shift of the final scene to the final 'tableau.' Exactly how the bandits emerge from their hideout to the open street remains a mystery; they are, nevertheless, seen doing battle with the gendarmes. Just as inexplicably, Robert and his 'foreman' disappear in a festively-decorated balloon, pursued by the gendarmes' bullets. In this way, the Montgolfier brothers have rendered obsolete the time-worn chariot of the gods, and the ending has kept abreast with the scientific advances of the nineteenth century.

As with the self-reflective 'ironic reversal' in the comic closure of Raimund, Nestroy, and Eichendorff, Robert Macaire represents a landmark of closural innovation. The climactic ending can only be parodied once its conventions are established. By extension, the slim distance now separating the melodrama and the romantic drama is evident. The ascension of Robert Macaire's balloon ironically deflates the suspension of action in the final scenes of dramas such as Antony.

If the positive, moralistic ending has loosened its hold on the melodrama, it has only tightened its grip on the most popular plays of the period. The tone of radical protest emanating from Marion de Lorme, Antony, and many of the dramas of Vigny and Musset to be discussed in the forthcoming section is certainly not the dominant tendency in non-romantic works; nor is the mocking attitude of Frederick Lemaître, who determines that, for once at least, the 'villain' should be a loveable rogue with a Paradise created especially for him. Between 1820 and 1830, the 'dramatist in residence' at the Théâtre du Gymnase, Eugene Scribe, had composed over one hundred plays alone or in collaboration, and amassed a goodly fortune in the process. The bucolic vaudeville of the previous century had been transformed into a new genre, the comédie-vaudeville, which takes its subjects from the street and the salon. If space in literary histories were alloted according to popular success, Scribe would by far outshine the French Romantics.

To turn from Marion de Lorme's cry, 'Voici l'homme rouge qui passe!' to the Pangloss world of the closing address in Scribe's Avant, pendant et apres, esquisses historiques (perf. 1828) reinforces the originality of romantic closure:

> Et nous, mes amis, mes concitoyens, qui après tant d'orages sommes enfin arrivés au port, et qui goûtons, à l'abri du trône et des lois, cette liberté sage et moderée que tous nos voeux appelaient depuis quarante ans, conservons-la bien; nous l'avons payée assez cher. Toujours unis, toujours d'accord . . . ne voyons que le bien qui existe; éloignons les tristes souvenirs, et dirons tous, dans la France nouvelle: 'Union et oubli.'[93]

A series of sketches spanning the periods 1789 ('Avant'), 1793 ('pendant') and 1825 ('après'), the drama reinforces our thesis that the mere rejection of the unities does not constitute a romantic drama. Far more important are the ethos and the structure and function of closure.

Clarity and logic are fundamental to Scribe's plots. His aims, like those of Pixérécourt, are to amuse and to instruct. Arvin emphasizes that the recipe of the well-made play with an optimistic message is welcome to the masses of theatregoers:

> A public worn out emotionally by the horrors of the Revolution and by the disasters of the Empire could best be entertained if its curiosity was aroused by a skillfully prepared plot, if its interest was held by a brilliant development of this plot, and if its expectations were satisfied by a logical, even a predictable denoument.[94]

He could well add that a cosy, comfortably optimistic 'denouement' could only add to its popular appeal.

That the *comédie-vaudeville* represents a major opponent of the romantic drama emerges clearly from the commentary of Théophile Gautier. Already in 1838 he writes that the 'romantic revolution in drama' has not continued.[95] In place of the 'drame moderne' which is 'complexe de sa nature et représente une action sous plusieurs de ses faces,' he states, 'on joue partout et toujours la meme pièce; l'on est arrivé à produire des vaudevilles qui ne peuvent tomber, étant composés de morceaux déjà applaudis vingt ou trente fois dans l'autres vaudevilles.'[96] In an earlier review of September, 1837, he has already deplored the 'vaudeville moral et manufacturier' which preaches 'la caisse d'épargnes, le service de la garde nationale, l'acquittement régulier des impositions, les sociétés de tempérance, la philanthropie et les voitures cellulaires.'[97] In France, as in England and the German states, therefore, a counter-movement gather strength and pits itself against the thematic and structural innovations of the Romantics. Although Scribe is not unaffected by romantic tendencies--the very concept of an 'esquisse historique' reveals his eclecticism--he appeals, like Ancelot in Un Divorce, to sentiments of order and middle-class morality.

Romanticism posed little real threat to the popularity that Scribe acquired as early as 1815. While the romantic upsurge of 1830 occasioned a slight set-back to the vaudeville vogue, Arvin comments with a certain partiality that by 1833 'mental habits of decency and good taste' were reinstated.[98] Scribe himself, however, was not immune to lapses in taste and decency. His libretti for the operas Robert le diable (perf. 1831) and La Juive (perf. 1835), both of which hover betwen melodrama and Romanticism, incorporate climactic endings. The former, somewhat similar in its pageantry to the ending of Käthchen von Heilbronn, reveals a huge tableau of a lighted cathedral, organ music, chants, and the pomp of a wedding ceremony--Robert's fitting reward for having escaped imminent perdition at the hands of his demon-father. La Juive concludes somewhat unctuously: the heroine meets her death by leaping into a pot of boiling oil at the moment that the Cardinal presiding over the auto-da-fé learns that she is his long-lost daughter.

These endings reveal, however, more about the affinities of dramatic and operatic closure in the romantic age than about Scribe's habitual practice. One prime instance of what Gautier labels 'la croisade entreprise contre les drames immoraux' of the Romantics lies in Dix ans de la vie d'une femme, ou les mauvais conseils (perf. 1832).[99]

Unlike Dumas' Adèle in Antony, the Adèle of Scribe's drama earns no sympathy. Vice in the form of adultery is thoroughly punished by a life of prostitution and death from consumption caused by undue exposure to the night air. Devoid of virtue, the heroine is held up as a negative example.

In an interesting variation of this theme, Scribe's drama La Seconde année, ou à qui la faute? (perf. 1830) depicts a husband who, having cast lecherous eyes upon a dancer, does not sink to perdition, unlike Adèle. Rather, he realizes his error, presents his wife with a set of diamonds originally intended for the mistress, and resumes a life of marital bliss. 'Mais dans ce monde il ne s'agit que de s'entendre' (III xvii , p. 413): these words summarize the prevalent sense of the ending in the bourgeois comédie-vaudeville of Scribe.

## 11. Closure from the stage to the armchair: Vigny and Musset, 1830-9.

As noted in our preceding section, the signs of a gradual retreat from the theatre among the Romantics do not escape the alert mind of Gautier. 'Nos espérances ont été trompées,' he observes in a review of January 1, 1838. This he blames not so much on the public, whose only demand is to be 'étonné et surpris,' as on directors, who imagine themselves 'académiciens,' and carry with them the prejudices of that body. They are closed to experimentation: 'ils ont horreur des accessoires, des changements à vu, et demandent que toutes les actions se nouent et se dénouent dans le salon vert-pomme et dans le salon nankin.'[100]

The accuracy of the above view, perceptive as it is, may be in part questioned. The modest success of most performances, the cool receptions of theatrical reviewers, and the constant harrassment of censorship suggest that the time is only partially ripe for an experimental theatre. Although Gautier does not share the disgust of Tieck, Hazlitt and Lamb toward the stage spectacle--a confirmation of the particularly close ties existing between the French romantic drama and the theatre--the problem lies possibly beyond theatrical presentation. Gautier's reference to the 'knotting' and 'unknotting' of the intrigue within the confines of a salon may perhaps offer a clue to the drama's partial retreat from the stage. As Hazlitt has astutely observed in his Dramatic Essays discussed in our preceding chapter, the post-Revolutionary age is concerned with business and the petty intrigues of society. While the creative mind may still be fired with the problems of social alienation and political injectice, problems which lead to no harmonious outcome, the larger public is tired of upheaval, bent on handling the immediate problems of everyday life, unwilling to be perturbed or perplexed. Hence the lasting appeal of Scribe, who addresses the situations encountered in the salon. Indirectly, therefore, the sharp opposition between the ethos of closure in the romantic drama, with its refusal to impose 'safe' or absolute values, and the moral and ethical certainty voiced in the ending of the comédie-vaudeville may draw us nearer to an understanding of the preferences of the era.

Alfred de Vigny and Alfred de Musset are, to somewhat different degress, affected by the increasing alienation of the romantic dramatist from the theatre. That this disenchantment is not only on the part of directors is confirmed by Vigny's observation on the performance of Le More de Venise: 'Une foule que je méprise jugera l'oeuvre sans la comprendre' ('Le Journal d'un poète,' II, p. 896, Sept. 1829). Musset, on the other hand, vows after the failure of *La Nuit vénitienne, ou les noces de Laurette* (1830), of which *Le Corsaire* wrote, 'On siffla, siffla et resiffla!' never again to submit a piece to the theatre.[101] Having said 'adieu à la menagerie,' he next devises the term 'le spectacle dans un fauteuil,' the title of his two-drama anthology of 1833.[102] Only in 1847, with the first performances of *Un Caprice*, do his works again reach the stage.

With Vigny, the ambivalence toward the theatre is more a personal reaction than, as with the English Romantics, a dissatisfaction with popular taste and contemporary stage machinery. A less extroverted personality than Hugo or Dumas, possessed of a keen sense of irony ('Je dois donc dire que j'ai cru démêler en moi deux êtres bien distinct l'un de l'autre, *le moi dramatique*, qui vit avec activité et violence . . . et *le moi philosophique*, qui se sépare journellement de l'autre moi, le dédaigne, le juge, le critique, l'analyse, le regarde passer' 'Journal d'un poete,' 1835, II, p. 1032 ), the exhibitionism of the theatre is foreign to his nature. Not only the self-critical distancing of an ironic awareness, but also a belief in the purity of the 'idea,' combine to force the artist to a 'silence obstine.' When 'une société légère, distraite, agitée en mille sens' expects the playwright to present his work in a form that 'lui cause une profonde et même une douloureuse impression,' ('Autour de *Chatterton*,' I, p. 585), the 'idée vraie' is tainted. With these words Vigny reveals a side of Romanticism different from that of Hugo's dramas, connecting himself more with the meditative, philosophical aspects of the movement than with the flamboyantly polemical.

Nevertheless, the awareness of the problems that belabour the individual in the face of society and history injects the dramas of Vigny, like those of Dumas and Hugo, with that note of realism which is not atypical of Romanticism. The elements which cloak the romantic drama in a guise of remote fantasy, however, are again combined, as in Angelo, tyran de Padoue and Ruy Blas, and the majority of German and English dramas of the period, with history.

La Maréchale d'Ancre (wr. 1830; perf. 1831) represents Vigny's attempt to 'faire lire une page d'histoire sur le théâtre' ('Journal d'un poète,' II, p. 1081). This phrase in itself emphasizes a prominent feature of the romantic drama: it demands, in essence, a spectator as attentive to detail as the ideal reader would be. A new 'contract' is being forged between sender, work, and receiver:

> Il me suffira d'indiquer ici les ressorts cachés par lesquels se meut tout l'ouvrage. Les spectateurs et les lecteurs attentifs sauront en suivre le jeu, et ceux qui les ont découverts me sauront gré de n'avoir pas laissé ces ressorts à nu dans le corps du drama.
> ('Avant-propos,' II, p. 379)

The drama is, in the view of Vigny, a collage, whose shifting contours the reader must penetrate. Its movement, moreover, is not linear; rather, it forms a 'circle' with Destiny at the centre (p. 379). Although the movement of fate 'dès que le caractère s'affaiblit ou s'altère' may be 'd'un pas très sûr,' the outcome is nevertheless unpredictable and mysterious.

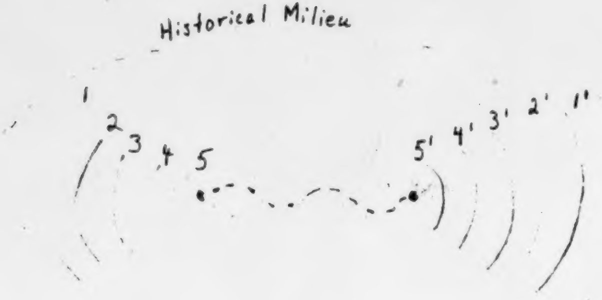
These incisive auto-criticisms are followed by several debatable statements. Whether La Maréchale actually concerns 'le pouvoir souverain dans les mains d'une femme,' whether it moralistically portrays 'l'adultère frappé,' and whether the ending evokes pity (p. 379) are matters indeed open to question; one suspects, rather, that these statements are sops for the reviewers and the censors.

La Maréchale d'Ancre, 'drame en cinq actes,' produces the effect of a collage overflowing with images, a tendency which, 'Le Journal d'un poete' hints, lends itself more easily to the scope of a novel rather than to the 'trop étroites proportions' (sic) of the drama (II, novembre (?) 1832, p. 972). The collage structure provides a framework for both the beginning and the ending. In this way, 'le cercle qui décrit cette composition' is formed. This circular framework linking the first and final scenes is, as in Tieck's Genoveva, composed of a series of parallel scenes which are, in the ending, inverted and 'replayed.'

The 'Scène Première' is that of the court: its idle pastimes, its intrigues, its gossip. As the initially unfocused snatches of conversation begin to centre more sharply on the character and actions of the Maréchale and her family, the radius of the circles, metaphorically speaking, begins to narrow. Indirectly the stage has been set for forthcoming conflict, and the central questions about the heroine have been raised: is she 'méchante, mensongère, ambitieuse, avare, orgeuilleuse et cruelle' (I, i, p. 392), or is she 'bonne, sincère, modérée, généreuse, modeste et bienfaisante; quoique ce ne soit, après tout, qu'une parvenue?' (I, i, p. 392). At the same time, the spiteful statement of Fiesque has ironically foreshadowed the heroine's demise: 'Il faut à cette sorte de femme un de ces traits héroiques ou l'une de ces grandes actions de dévouement qui sont pour elle comme un philtre amoureux, portant en lui plus de substances enivrantes et délirantes qu'une longue fidélité n'en peut infuser dans un débile cerveau féminin. Faute de quoi . . .' (I, i, p. 394). The framework predicts and summarizes the development of the drama. The Prince de Condé, we are told, has the support of the people, and with his ascent, 'elle [la Maréchale] est écrasée, ainsi que la reine mère' (p. 395).

Finally, the moving spotlight narrows to focus on the entrance of the Maréchale at the side of Concini. After the first exchanges of husband and wife, a detail of which the jealous company is unaware emerges: the Maréchale may indeed be the ruling force behind the Queen Regent, but the ambition that directs her actions is that of her husband. The essential innocence of the heroine, whose plight is caused by an excess of devotion, is thus evident. Simultaneously, another development foreshadows the ending. The duel between Borgia and Fiesque, inspired by the latter's attempts to gain admittance to the hiding place of the former's wife, is a preview of the far more deadly duel that will end the drama.

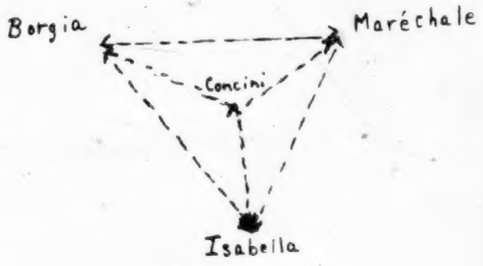
The 'core action' now commences, a complex interweaving of collage sketches which, shifting from the major development--the thoughts and reactions of the Maréchale as her personal and political identity crumbles around her--to side intrigues, resembles a chaotic avalanche. The ending, like that of Tieck's Genoveva, reverses the collage structure of the opening scene.



↓
1. group scene: the aristocracy
2, 'il faut à cette sorte de femme...' foreshadowing of Maréchale's manner of death.
3. accusation: sorcery
4. prefiguration: fall of Regent, Maréchale
5. preliminary duel: jealousy

1'. group scene: 'people'
'nobility'
2'. 'Brûlée!'
3'. self-incrimination: sorcery
4'. prefiguration of further conflict: 'nous venger tous'
5'. final duel; jealousy
↑

Neatly as the motifs of the beginning and ending link with each other, the underlying conflicts and tensions are in no way resolved. The deaths of Concini and Borgia do not serve to reconcile the two interlinked triangles of jealousy which have formed against the background of political power-dealings:



In the belief that the 'whole' truth has now been revealed, the Maréchale, looking at the bodies of Borgia and Concini, says, 'On m'a amenée pour tout voir . . .' (V, xvi, p. 510). Ironically she cannot see 'all,' for in her eyes, Borgia is still guilty of duplicity, a man who has concealed a wife and slain her husband, courting her all the while. The ensuing pang of jealousy ('Elle prend sa main . . . avec un sentiment triste et jaloux,' p. 510) merely provides another testimony of defeat and reinforces her determination to die: 'Sa femme le pleurera.--Moi, je veux mourir.'

The Marechale's self-condemnation provides the climactic component of the ending: 'Je me confesse criminelle de lèse-majeste divine et humaine, et coupable de magie' (p. 511). Here, in effect, is a typological equivalent to Lucile's cry of 'Vive le roi!' which terminates Dantons Tod. For both women, self-incrimination is a response to a hopeless situation. While Büchner's drama, however, closes on this climactic note, here the collage structure continues. Luynes' triumphant 'Brûlée!' is follwed by a symbolic tableau: the heroine, on her way to execution lowers her eyes to her husband's body, 'étendu . . . sur la borne de Ravaillac' (V, xvi, p. 511). As Vigny's preface has pointed out, 'le couteau de Ravaillac' (p. 379), which has accomplished Concini's rise, has now ceded to 'le pistolet de Vitry.' The tableau thus symbolically reflects the beginning, end, and new beginning of a political era.

SIgnificantly, the view shifts in the brief seventeenth act to Vitry, who, ignoring the commoners who have fought for a new order, now leads the 'gentilhommes et mousquétaires' (p. 511) to pay court to the new King. The final scene consists of a mass tableau and a question.

Again forgotten, the people cluster around the body of Borgia, their slain proponent. Their spokesman's question, 'Et nous?' (V, xviii, p. 511) shatters the illusion that the inner developments of the drama have accomplished any significant change in the political situation. Circularity connects the past with the present. Nothing has changed; new oppressors have replaced the old. The murders that mark the end of one regime now mark the beginning of the new. By pitting the false resolution of the preceding scene against the disorder of the final, the ending thus also represents an ironic reversal.

La Maréchale d'Ancre, performed for the first time three months after Antony, 'n'était qu'un succès honorable.'[103] The reviews were largely negative, although that of the National recognized the 'mille nuances' of the work.[104] Sakellaridès, in one of the few works devoted to Vigny's theatrical endeavours, remarks that this is 'le plus directement écrit sous l'influence romantique' of the epoch.[105] More than the dramas examined thus far in our study of the French romantic theatre it exemplifies the collage structure so widely used by Vigny's German precursors and contemporaries. Here, for the first time in the French romantic drama, we encounter a work that combines all five of the closural structures posited by our examination: the climactic, the circular, the tableau, the collage, and the ironic reversal. The intricate but loosely-linked collage-montage form of the Maréchale is indeed a far cry from the melodramatic-romantic forms of Hugo and Dumas, and resembles rather the earlier experiments of Mérimée.

The sense of the dramatic ending is not, as the works examined throughout the course of our study have repeatedly revealed, merely a product of the final motifs. Rather, it is an aggregate of elements which include the title, subtitle, act division, verse (or prose) form: in short, the ending is affected by the very shape of the drama. The designation 'comédie,' for instance, is significant, for it gives rise to the expectation of a happy ending, as, for instance, in Vigny's little-known Quitte pour la peur (perf. 1833). This one-act drama, viewed by Jules Janin as the originator of the 'proverbe,' was staged only once on the occasion of Marie Dorval's benefit performance at the Opera. The responses were either lukewarm or derogatory. The vituperative review in Les Débats provides a negative affirmation of the work's originality: it bases its attack on

> . . . ces modes et ces ridicules, choses si rapides et si fugitives qu'on saurait à peine les saisir quand elles passent devant nous. Le triste et froid acceuil que le public a fait aux trois scènes sans action, sans gaîté, sans vraisemblance morale ou immorale . . . l'ont trop averti de son erreur [i.e., Vigny] pour la lui reprocher davantage.[106]

The ending's contribution to the above list of blunders is implied: it forms a major part of the misunderstood irony of the drama, in that its pseudo-solution is also 'fugitive,' and reinforces a problem without a moral.

The outcome, as suggested above, contradicts the Erwartungshorizont established by the designation 'comédie.' An ironic tension is thus created. The title, moreover, sets into opposition two concepts: that of the adjective 'quitte,' which refers to the settling of pecuniary debts, as in 'je vous tiens quitte,' to discharge moral or social obligations, chiefly of an onerous nature; and that of 'fear.' The juxtaposition of an adjective with material connotations and of an emotion poses a riddle, suggesting that any resolution will be paradoxical.

On the surface, the ending of Quitte pour la peur is reconciliatory. The long dialogue of the Duke and Duchess (Sc. xii) moves from an agitated beginning, signalled by the last words of the preceding scene ('Mon Dieu! ayez pitié de moi!' xi, p. 406 ), through shouts, tears and anger to close in apparent harmony. The flexibility of prose allows the ending to move quietly but rapidly from bathos to reasoned detachment. In one sentence, the Duke neatly tosses forth a resolution: 'En voici la preuve: vox gens et les miens m'ont vu entrer, ils me verront sortir, et pour le monde, c'est tout ce qu'il faut' (xii, pp. 716-7). In short, by spending a few hours with his wife, he has legitimized both her unborn child, which has been conceived 'on the wrong side of the sheets,' and the family honour. This gesture, stemming more from a superficial code of honour rather than from any depth of generosity of feeling, is ironically set off by the Duckess's naive reaction: 'Ah! . . . quelle bonté! . . . Votre générosité m'écrase!' (p. 717). By the same token, the extravagance of her desire to enter a convent--appropriate to the resolution of a sentimental drama but not to a comedy--clashes ironically with the reasoned tit-for-tat settlement that has just been achieved. At his wife's suggestion, the Duke bursts out with the first spontaneous response he has exhibited througout the action: 'C'est trop! C'est beaucoup trop!' As if conscious of his lapse into mere emotion, he again slides into indifference: 'Du reste, il n'en sera que ce que vous voudrez,' followed by fatuous pomposity: 'Adieu! Moi, je vous ai sauvée en sauvant les apparences!' The clockwork regularity of his thoughts and life-style are reflected by the stage directions: 'il sonne, on ouvre, il sort.'

Ostensibly the brief final scene continues the moralistic commentary commenced by the husband's last words. Hidden within the apparent reconciliation, however, is the pinprick which accomplishes an ironic reversal. The Duke, the wife admits, is not an enemy but her 'best friend.' He has saved her from the disgrace of a scandal. Like Ibsen's Nora, however, she realizes that her treatment has been that of a child; unlike Nora, she has no door to slam. Rather, the servant's closing words, with the ironic reference to a society which treats emotions as if they were monetary debts, neatly snaps shut the 'door' of the drama: 'Toujours est-il que nous en violà QUITTE POUR LA PEUR' (xiii, p. 717). The door which has so neatly closed on a structural level accomplishes no similar resolution of the problems of the drama. On the one hand, marriage remains a claustrophobic trap; on the other, the political world of Louis XVI which hovers in the background continues, as the Duke has grandiloquently described, to feed on grand phrases, such as Voltaire's 'Dieu et la Liberte!' (viii, p. 698) and to shy away from action in the face of an oncoming revolution. On both a personal and a social level, therefore, the problems remain. A specious trick of reasoning has illustrated the ostrich-like 'head in the sand' mores of the age, and has set up extra-historical links with the world of the nineteenth century.

With both *La Meréchale* and *Chatterton* (wr. 1834; perf. 1835), Vigny emphasizes that the unity of time has been observed (I, p. 823; II, p. 513). These demonstrations prove merely that the presence or absence of the much-debated unities has little effect on the structure and ethos of the drama. The determinants lie far more in the conception and movement (or non-movement) of intrigue, in the rhetoric, and in the structures and functions of closure. La Maréchale d'Ancre is not merely the story of a woman and her husband who, in the morning, are at the height of their political power, only to be dead or condemned by nightfall. Rather, it is the portrait of several niveaux of society, a probing of exceptional and contradictory characters, and a commentary on a socio-political order which does not, to misquote Tennyson, yield place to a new. Similarly, Chatterton is not merely the account of a poet 'qui a écrit une lettre le matin, et qui attend la réponse jusqu'au soir; elle arrive, et le tue' (I, 'Dernière nuit de travail,' p. 825). Action is not an arrow directed from one point to another. The focus, as Vigny points out, lies in the 'âme' of the protagonist and in the 'coeurs' of the receivers (p. 823). The portrait of 'l'homme spiritualiste étouffé par une société matérialiste' (p. 823) is therefore not a representation of action, but of feeling and reaction.

In Chatterton, the worlds of the artist and the bourgeoisie are in direct confrontation. Each has its spatial contours: on the main floor of the Bell residence are the opulent living quarters of the merchant and his family; upstairs in the sombre obscurity, the miserable room of Chatterton. The lower world is dominated by the 'voix tonnante' of the tyrannical father, preoccupied with matters of material gain and outward prestige; the upper is the isolated one where the poet burns his lamp throughout the night and weeps over his manuscripts. The intermediary world is a special one, qualified by sensitivity and suffering (Kitty), innocence (the children), and religious faith (the Quaker) to move between the two antagonistic levels.

Once the initial situation has been set, little changes in the course of three acts. The form resembles that of an avalanche where the overhanging threats suddenly come loose and bury the protagonists. As Gautier remarks in his review of 1857, 'le drame est tout intime et ne se compose que d'une idée; de fait, d'action, il n'y en a pas, si ce n'est pas le suicide du poète déviné dès le premier mot.'[107]

The drama is therefore, in a sense, a 'final situation,' and tension consists chiefly in the proximity of the avalanche. This come to a head in the final scene of the third act by means of a series of tableau interspersed with exclamations, unanswered questions and implorations. Communication by means of words has, with the death of Chatterton and the crumblings of paternal 'order' in the household, broken down. Already in the eighth scene of the final act the exchanges have become progressively more fragmentary and rapid .e.g.,

> Chatterton: Allez-vous en . . . Adieu!
> Kitty Bell, _tombant_: Je ne le plus . . . .
> (III, viii, p. 897)

The final scene begins with two tableau, one encased within the other. First attention is focused on Kitty's pantomime of anguish and trepidation: '_elle suit le quaker avec terreur, en écoutant le bruit de la chambre de Chatterton_' (III, ix, p. 897). The second tableau, that of Chatterton's deathbed, comes into view when Kitty, in spite of her failing strength, pulls open the door to his room: '_On voit Chatterton mourant et tombé sur le bras du quaker_' (p. 898). In the true spirit of Diderot's _Entretiens_, the heroine's reaction is not encased in words but in the pantomimic aspects of the tableau. '_Elle crie, glisse à demi morte sur la rampe de l'éscalier et tombe sur la dernière marche_.' Her fall may also be, in part, symbolic. In moving from the lower level, the locus of established bourgeois order, to the higher, she has merged with the identity and fate of Chatterton. Her origins as the wife of John Bell and the mother of a bourgeois household have, however, exiled her from the precarious world of the artist just as much as her passion for Chatterton has exiled her from the solid world at the foot of the stairs. That she does not answer John Bell's call of 'Mistress Bell!' is therefore not only a sign of her weakness in the face of death, but also of her rejection of her former role. A new tableau forms, that of Kitty inaudibly stammering over her Bible, the children clinging to her skirts. The brief dialogue of the Quaker and the merchant trails away, to be replaced by the second death scene. The stage divides into two tableaux: '*John Bell . . . reste stupéfait. Kitty Bell meurt dans les bras du quaker*.' The impatient, incomprehending words of John Bell rupture the silence and reinforce the division between the world of the spirit, represented by Chatterton and Kitty, and the world of materialistic existence: 'Eh bien! Eh bien! Kitty! Kitty! qu'avez-vous?' On this note, his question unanswered, his role in the drama terminates. Indirectly, it is suggested that no understanding or reconciliation has been achieved. Bell, the symbol of the larger world which has victimized both Kitty and Chatterton, remains unemlightened, a suggestion reinforced by the Quaker's reference to 'martyrdom' in his final prayer. Another tableau now ends the drama: '*Le quaker reste à genoux, les yeux tournés vers le ciel, jusqu'à ce que le rideau soit baissé*.'

In one sense, the closing prayer directs the ending toward transcendent reconciliation. This, however, contrasts with the other components of the final situation. A mild form of ironic reversal is implicit. The sense of the 'martyrdom' is also ambiguous. It has not only been imposed by a hostile society, but also by the very contradictions of human existence. That the problems of the drama extend beyond those of social antagonism toward an existential dilemma has already been implied by the Quaker: 'Comment le mal sort du bien, et le désordre de l'ordre même, violà ce que tu ne peux t'expliquer, n'est-ce pas?' (II, v, p. 864). The idea of heavenly transcendence thus emerges as a weak pacifier.

That the ending of Chatterton 'produisit la plus forte impression' of the entire play was probably as much due to Marie Dorval's interpretation of the role of Kitty as to the framework of words and gestures provided by Vigny. While the famous actress, forced to take the role of Adèle in Scribe's Dix Ans de la vie d'une femme, left the stage in tears of chagrin, the romantic drama demanded her ful talents. One gesture in particular gripped the imagination of the spectators. Although the Courrier des Théâtres, referring sarcastically to Dorval's 'dégringolade' in the final scene, suggested that Vigny should, for his next play, ask the acrobat Madame Séqui 'si elle pourrait sauter quatre étages en faisant trois tours en l'air et tomber sur l'orteil,' the role evoked wild enthusiasm.[109] Théophile Gautier describes Marie's famous slide from the top to the foot of the staircase leading to Chatterton's room: 'John Bell peut appeler tant qu'il voudra avec sa grosse voix, la timide creature ne répondra pas, et du seuil de le chambre funeste glissera sur la rampe de l'escalier pour tomber a genoux et cacher sa tête innocemment coupable entre les feuillets humides de sa Bible.'[110] Even more dithyrambically he recalls her 'cri déchirant à la fin,' and returns to the gestures with which she mounts and descends the stairs: 'quel abandon lorsqu'elle roulait, an bas de ces marches montées par élans convulsifs, par saccades folles, presque a genoux, les pieds pris dans sa robe, les bras tendus, l'âme projetee hors du corps qui ne pouvait la suivre!'[111]

The strength of Vigny's ending thus lies not so much in its verbal resources as in its ability to evoke from the actor an intense pantomime of feeling. By requiring the actor, spectator, or reader to fill in the bare outline provided by the stage directions and the misdirected words of the characters, which reveal mainly their inability to understand each other, the dramatist makes strong demands on the receiver's sympathy and power of imaginative identification.

With Vigny and Musset the French romantic ending rises, in our view, to its most accomplished heights of complexity and expression. Although the younger dramatist has inspired a great volume of critical commentary, Vigny has yet to receive the attention that his theoretical and dramatic work merit.[112] The closural practice of Musset will further build upon and develop the typological patterns demonstrated by Quitte pour la peur and La Maréchale d'Ancre.

Reference has already been made to the young Musset's disasterous theatrical début with La Nuit vénitienne. According to his brother and biographer Paul Musset, the director Harel had asked Alfred to write a play 'la plus neuve et la plus hardie possible.'[113] The author lived up to this expectation. Lafoscade comments that 'il a trop cherché a se distinguer, et il a abusé un procédé dangéreux. Il a cru qu'il suffisait de prendre le contre-pied des usages établis pour renouveler l'art dramatique.'[114] This statement, while it focuses on the content of the work, is yet misleading, particularly from a chronological perspective. A curious phenomenon is visible in La Nuit vénitienne, performed on 1 December, 1830, the year of the so-called unlaunching of the French romantic drama. The 'conventions' so audaciously exaggerated in Musset's juvenile work are those that, with Vigny, Dumas and Hugo, are to be hailed as so astoundingly or shockingly revolutionary. Already at this early time in his development, Musset not only ruptures with Classicist conventions, but also appears to parody a new set of conventions which. according to standard critical opinion, are not yet fully established: a view implied by Lafoscade's contention that the 'romantiques et classiques se font a cette époque une guerre acharnée.'[115]

La Nuit vénitienne ou les noces de Laurette, while a failure in the theatre, is nevertheless a significant indicator of the dramatic roots from which Musset's later dramas spring. Like Vigny's Quitte pour la peur, La Nuit vénitienne imposes certain expectations upon the ending at the very beginning. The motto following the title is 'perfide comme l'onde,' a quotation from Vigny's Othello adaptation.[116] This phrase, one of the accusations of Othello against Desdemona, suggests that the outcome will not only reveal the perfidy of woman, but also will combine the themes of jealous rivalry and violence. When, therefore, both men and women are proved equally unfaithful, and when frenzied jealousy and plans of either murder or suicide have proved mere poses struck by a Quixotic hero, the ending neatly reverses the expectations incurring from the motto. The names of the characters, moreover, prefigure the mockery in the ending. 'Razetta,' the disconsolate lover, evokes connotations of 'raseur,' 'rasant,' as well as of the German verb 'rasen,' as in Nestroy's 'Rasenbank'; 'Eysenach,' in its gallicized pronunciation, resembles the bray of a donkey; 'Le secrétaire Intime Grimm' and 'Madame Balbi' can refer only to caricatures. These elements suggest a burlesque melodrama. Critical opinion, however, tends to approach and condemn this drama as a serious work. Gochberg dismisses it as a failure, while Affron detects in it 'the ritualistic exoticism of the period'; Lafoscade refers to 'cette originalité si équivoque' and 'cette mésaventure si vulgaire.'[117] Eric Gans argues in his Existentialist analysis of Musset's dramas that, unlike the typical romantic work, La Nuit vénitienne incorporates no 'séparation entre subjectivité transcendentale et communauté réelle,' but that, in the outcome, Razetta decides to preserve his 'différence subjective dans un contexte de pure liberté où elle sera reconnue pour de bon.' By deciding to embark on a gondola in search of pleasure, the hero reserves 'sa disponibilité pour d'autres aventures.'[118]

Unfortunately, neither Musset nor his contemporaries were aware of Sartre. In our view, La Nuit vénitienne can far more simply and meaningfully be viewed within the contexts of Romanticism, melodrama, and irony turned to parody, and its outcome, regarded as an ironic reversal. Musset's concept of what from our present vantage-point may be typologically designated 'romantic irony' is far keener than that of Hugo, Dumas, or Vigny. As René Bourgeois succinctly points out, 'la dénonciation ironique des illusions' is a principle of creation among the French Romantics even if its theory has not fully been elaborated. Language, intrigue and character throughout Musset's whimsical drama suggest the 'contestation permanente' of an ironic ethos, and the ending, in particular, administers the final ironic jolt which causes Razetta, the 'Rasender,' to give up his attempt at 'jouer sa vie' (iii, p. 417) and to begin playing yet another role.[119]

The play as 'play,' and the ending as a dispersal of one game and the commencement of another: here lies the significance of closure in Musset's first performed drama; here as well is the key-note that characterizes his future sense of the ending. The French Romantic movement, as our study has argued, does not 'begin' in 1830, neither in the drama nor in the other genres. The subliterary melodrama, moreover, has by this time already become the object of parody.[120] Musset's overblown language and the hero's pseudo-desperate stances are thus not signs of immaturity, but rather, signs of a self-conscious game with both old and new conventions.

The drama begins and ends with a gondola. The desperate lover descends from the boat to find Laurette on her balcony. Already romance conventions are to be reversed, for the heroine, unlike Juliette, is to say 'Adieu pour toujours' (i, p. 391). A marriage of convenience has been arranged with the Prince d'Eysenach. The hero's raving begins: Razetta, a Childe Harold who plays his role all too well, asks, 'Pour qui ai-je tout quitté? Je ne parle de mas devoirs, je les méprise; je ne parle pas de mon pays, de ma famille, de mes amis; avec de l'or, on en trouve partout. Mais l'héritage de mon pere, ou est il? J'ai perdu mes épaulettes. . .' (i, p. 393). This fragment of dialogue summarizes, in essence, the ironic process of the work, and reveals the operation of the ending. The play moves from a grandiose swagger which arouses expectations of a Hugolian tirade (Hernani had, of course, been performed for the first time ten months previously!), only to fall into banality. Shudders of terror resume when, flung a mask by a reveller, Razetta mixes incognito with the guests at Laurette's wedding feast, a pseudo-Ruy Gomez bent on vengeance. He commits a daring act, that of smuggling a letter to his mistress, enclosing a dagger with which she is to murder her new husband. Unfortunately, Laurette, enchanted to find her new bridegroom a sentimental namby-pamby whose conversation is culled from le roman larmoyant, leaves Razetta's plea unanswered. The hero now feels obligated to commit suicide; the prospect, however, terrifies him. As life hangs on a wire, a gondola filled with revellers draws up. Voices hail the would-be desperado:

> Viens, nous allons souper chez Camilla . . . . Veux-tu tuer ton rival ou te noyer? Laisse ces idées communes aux vulgaires des amants; souviens-toi de toi-même, et ne donne pas le mauvais exemple (iii, p. 418).

The mock tragedy, or the incipient melodrama complete with jealous rivals, disguises, hidden murder-weapons and mysterious meetings is now, with the ending, ironically deflated. The dream vanishes, fading away on the water ('il monte dans la barque, qui disparaît au bruit des instruments,' p. 418), only, however, to merge with another, that of youth and revelry.

From one angle, therefore, the ending imposes a full stop on the hyperbolic love game; on another, it turns a full circle, whereby a young man sails in on a gondola, plays a role, and then sails out again on a gondola, seeking new forms of amusement. Similarly, the perfidious mock-Desdemona is swept off to a fairyland, a figment created merely by the words of a Prince who reads too many novels. Unlike the 'exit tag' of the Baroque ending, however, the ironic reversal of Musset's drama disperses one dream-world only to manufacture another.

In this way, an almost-forgotten and underrated work can reveal much about the dramatist's creative potential. Less eloquently than La Nuit vénitienne, Les Marrons du feu (1829; printed in the Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie) also 'treats a normally serious subject in a frivolous and farcial manner.'[121] Here again the ending is an 'about face.' Since the inherent irony merely consists in a sudden puncturing of illusion with a sudden revelation, the ending appears at first to lack the swivelling perpetuation of dream and illusion characteristic of the 'ironic reversal.' Another function, however, yet qualifies it for the above closural category. The 'commentary,' on an intertextual level, mocks the conventions of the moralistic verbal tag and pokes fun at the fore going bloody intrigue. The Abbé, who has eliminated the heroine's false lover only to be himself told to jump into the ocean, summarizes:

> --Elle est partie, o Dieu!
> J'ai tué mon ami, j'ai mérité le feu,
> J'ai taché mon pourpoint, et l'on me congédie.
> C'est la moralité de cette comédie.[122]

Gochberg, while he remarks on the abruptness and facetiousness of the ending, yet refers to the final line as 'a pointless comic epilogue.'[123] It is more than this, for, evoking both the Baroque 'exit tag' and the moralistic elements of conventional closure, it seals the intertextual links, as if the Abbott, aware that his 'role' is at an end, shares a wink of complicity with the receiver. This is, moreover, a romantic structure: Mérimée's Theatre de Clara Gazul comes to mind.

The posthumously-published Quittance du Diable (wr. 1830), 'pièce en trois tableaux mêlée de musique,' freely adapted from an episode of Walter Scott's Redgauntlet, reveals again the close ties between Romanticism and melodrama. A climactic ending composed of double motifs parallels the ending of Pocock's *The Miller and his Men*, discussed in our preceding chapter: a huge fire envelops the villain's castle, while the virtuous young lovers escape to safety. Another component, however, alters the structure and function of the ending. The diabolic Johny, no longer the buffoon-servant catalyst of the outcome, plays a Mephistophelian role, and his devilish machinations accomplish the triumph of virtue. In this way, Musset again reveals a partial distancing from convention. The melodramatic distinction between good and evil has been injected with an antithetical romantic element; at the same time, the ambiguous fusion of positive and negative traits in the romantic view of character does not lead, as in *Le Roi s'amuse*, to a pathetic but disasterous outcome; on the contrary, the straightforwardly positive ending of the melodrama is superimposed.

No less violent is the ending of *La Coupe et les lèvres* (wr., pr. 1832) published in the first edition of *Un Spectacle dans un Fauteuil*. Like Vigny's *Quitte pour la peur*, its title stems from a proverb: 'Entre la coupe et les lèvres, il reste encore de la place pour un malheur.' The goblet is, in this instance, indeed far from the lips, for a great deal of misfortune occurs. A dialogue with choral interludes, the dramatic poem is the long tale of a moribund hero who accumulates experience in a world which 'n'est qu'un mort étendu sous les anatomistes' (*Poésies*, p. 118). The ending completes a subcircle in a series of episodes, all moving from the frustrated ego's sense of deprivation only to return to a reaffirmation of the gaping abyss within the self. The circularity is further reinforced by inconclusiveness. Although the hero has last the pristine Déidamia, a woman who has promised to be mistress, lover, chattel, wife and servant

(Poésies, p. 205)--the loss is indeed immense--he remains alive, trapped in a living death.

With La Coupe aux lèvres the armchair drama has moved far from stage practice. The dramatic form has become a vehicle for the subjective 'I.' In its treatment of closure it nevertheless represents a small tributary from the mainstream of the French romantic drama. As in the German and English reading drama, the ending becomes merely another stage in a cluster of episodes. Even more than in Mérimée's La Jaquerie, Musset's closure practice here differs from the relatively end-directed dramas of his older contemporaries. The differences, it may be conjectured, stem more from personal foibles and a generation gap than from chronological distance. Although 1832 is a peak year in the romantic assault on the theatre, Musset is a number of years younger than Vigny, Dumas and Hugo. Even in an age which marked the emancipation of youth in literature, a distance of eight to ten years suggests that the younger writer, obsessed with the romantic ideal of originality, will be the 'enfant terrible.' To this we may add Musset's awareness of the larger European literary tradition, including the works of Jean Paul, Byron, and Hoffmann.[124]

André del Sarto (pr. 1833; perf. 1848) marks a renewed rapprochement to the stage practice, an observation borne out by the structure and function of the ending. The final scene is a coup de théâtre worthy of Dumas or Hugo. Once more, however, Musset's closure is more extreme than that of his contemporaries, as the stage history of the outcome reveals. The three-act printed version from the 'seconde livraison' of the Spectacle dans un fauteuil (1834; reprinted in the first edition of Comédies et proverbes, 1940) was used for the 1848 production at the Comédie Française, and, after its failure, withdrawn after five nights. Maurice Allem reports that its 'romantisme juvenile et outré' was at the root of its condemnation ('Notes et variantes,' p. 1189).

Upon the drama's revival at the Odéon three years later, censorship, temporarily abandoned in 1848, had been restored. The censor's report of 1851 supports its recommendation of withdrawal by merely summarizing the plot. The ending, in particular, is objectionable:

> On y voit en effet l'amour exalté jusqu'à couvrir d'une sorte de justification la trahison, l'adultère et le meurtre et, comme dénouement, un mari s'empoisonnant, pour affranchir de remords une femme coupable et un ami parjure et convert de sang.
> ('Notes et variantes,' p. 1191)

The above statement not only echoes the recurrent condemnation of romantic closure among reviewers, but, in its prudery, suggests a definitive movement toward a Biedermeier-like mentality. This time, however, Musset did not bid farewell to the 'ménagerie,' but revised the ending. The next censor's report, written three days after the first, observes 'des modifications importantes' (p. 1191).

> Cordiani meurt de sa blessure au dénouement et expie sa trahison et sa faute; ainsi, au lieu de deux coupables laissés libres et heureux par la mort d'André, il ne reste plus que la femme doublement punie de son crime par la perte de son amant et le suicide de son mari, dont le généreux dévouement ne peut maintenant qu'ajouter à ses remords (pp. 1191-2).

In short, the expiation of immoral or criminal conduct, the punishment of vice, the maintenance of marital ties, and a fitting degree of remorse after transgression determine, in 1851, the acceptability of the outcome.

To return, however, to 1833, certain questions arise: does the 'seclusion' of the reading drama create a protective environment for a daring outcome? Does Musset's original ending, contrary to Lafoscade's contention that the work is 'celle qui ressemble le plus à une drame romantique' actually exceed the implied limits of romantic closure?

One aspect is clear: Musset's outcome in André del Sarto is more extreme than that of Antony, Chatterton and Ruy Blas. The lovers in all three dramas, two of which postdate Musset's work, do not flee; their death or desolation may well be interpreted by a censor as a form of justice. We may indeed ask if some of the ambiguity of the French romantic ending results from a ploy to counteract censorship.

The outcome of the 1833 and 1840 versions of André del Sarto represents the final stage in the process of the hero's personal and creative disintegration. A disastrous love intrigue has coincided with the decadence of art in Florence. The moribund tone which mourns the passing of an age has blended throughout the drama with the pain and violence of the conflict caused by adultery, betrayal of friendship, and jealousy. In the second-last scene, André learns that his wife and Cordiani, her lover, have eloped and are riding to Piémont, a revelation that precipitates his suicide. Swallowing poison 'à la mort des arts en Italie' (III, iii, p. 1239), 'Variantes'), he orders that a servant should follow the lovers with a message. The second collage of the ending depicts Cordiani and Lucrèce on their lonely road of 'pressentiments funestres,' driven by a desire to have 'ni le temps de penser, ni le temps de souffrir' (III, iv, p. 1239, 'Variantes'). A rider overtakes them. His message causes the final climactic shock of the drama: 'Pourquoi fuyez-vous si vite? la veuve d'André del Sarto peut épouser Cordiani.'

According to Gochberg, 'the final scene depicts André's forgiveness of those who had by their adultery contributed to his agony.'[125] This assessment does not, in our view, render fully the equivocality of the ending. What seems an act of forgiveness may also be an act of revenge, just as Hugo's Tisbe, by means of her death, determines to forever haunt the relationship of Rodolfo and Catarina (Angelo, Tyran de Padoue).

André del Sarto is nevertheless the work of a dramatist who has not yet found his feet, and the ending appears contrived. Les Caprices de Marianne (1833; perf. 1851) comes closer to revealing the potential of Musset's dramatic abilities. A seemingly trivial theme here expands to the dimensions of tragedy. That this 'tragi-comedy' is in two acts instead of the conventional five of the tragedy or the three of the comedy and melodrama indicates again Musset's indifference to theatrical practice.

The intrigue is reminiscent both of the courtly romance and of Twelfth Night. The difference lies, however, in character and outcome. Célio's intermediary in the wooing of Marianne is Octave, a young rake. The ingenious tongue of Octave causes Marianne's interest to focus on him, just as in Twelfth Night the disguised Viola, spokesperson for the Duke, wins Olivia's love. Here, however, no Sebastian conveniently emerges to fill the gap vacated by Viola, once again turned woman; and no Viola exists to take the place of Olivia in the Duke's heart. The ending turns the incipient comedy to disaster.

Not only the 'caprice' of Marianne, who determines in the wake of her husband's jealousy to provide at least some basis for his fears, but also the ambiguity of words are at the root of the tragic outcome. Marianne's angry determination to 'se mettre à la mode' (II, xi, p. 264) is countered by the heated address of Octave on behalf of Célio. Words exercise a hypnotic power over both advocate and listener; 'Ne croyait-on pas, à vous entendre, que c'est pour vous que vous plaidez?' (II, xi, p. 266), says Marianne to Octave. The latter, while not unmoved by the woman's show of spirit ('En vérité, cette femme etait belle, et sa petite colère lui allait bien,' II, xvii, p. 270), is yet 'noble': 'souffler une maîtresse à un ami, c'est une rouerie trop commune pour moi.'

Abruptly, however, the masquerade turns to deadly earnest. The loyalty of Octave accomplishes the death of Célio, and Marianne's caprice has dire consequences: 'Est-ce possible que si peu de bon sens puisse donner tant de cruauté?' (II, xix, p. 272). Concurrently, the clouds of illusion--the mask of the irresponsible rake, the gallant game of courtship--lift to reveal the outcome. Marianne, seduced by words and the poses of courtship, has imagined 'un débauche sans coeur' who 'n'estime point les femmes' (II, xx, p. 273) to be in love with her; Octave, whose gaiety has been a mere mask for a heart 'plus vieux qu'elle' [i.e., than gaiety], realizes that, with the death of Célio, '[sa] place est vide sur la terre' (p. 274). The final line of the drama explodes Marianne's last scrap of illusion. To her self-deluded mind, Octave is still the courtly lover she craves. His revelation administers the final ironic reversal: 'Je ne vous aime pas, Marianne; c'etait Célio qui vous aimait.'

This outcome both perpetuates and adapts the romantic sense of the ending. In one sense, it exemplifies the ironic reversal, or the stick of dynamite that blows up the remnants of illusion, and the climactic ending, which directs closure forward to an unknown outcome beyond the represented text. Octave, his sword drawn, awaits the return of Claudio, a politically powerful man flanked by armed assassins. A suicidal gesture is thus imminent. Marianne is bereft of comfort in the awareness that her actions have, in effect, murdered a lover whose devotion she has mistakenly seen in another. Revelation is complete, but disorder persists in a universe where words smother truth, seeing results in illusion, and whims cause tragedy. The ironic reversal suggests an existential state similar to that in Kleist's Die Familie Schroffenstein.

The step which leads Musset's ending back to Kleist on an international scale also leads French romantic closure forward to new developments. The function of the ending in the romantic theatre both before and after Musset's drama lies in opposing the actual outcome with the ideal. Love in Antony, for instance, does not cease to represent an ideal; its defeat is caused mainly by the social factors that exile Antony from the norms of society and create inalienable gaps between the hero and heroine. Similarly, the relationship of Ruy Blas and the queen is doomed because of social inequality. Chatterton, while suggesting that art is both a sacred curse and a tributary cause of the hero's self-immolation, yet places the responsibility for the disastrous outcome squarely on the shoulders of society. With Musset, however, the dimensions of despair become existential.

While the ending of Une Caprice de Marianne ironically explodes the subjective universe created by playing frivolous games with human emotions, that of Fantasio (pr. 1833; perf. 1866) presents, in a semi-comic form, an exit from reality. The world theatre becomes a constantly renewable private theatre where, in face of ennui or creditors, the protagonist can resume his favourite role as court buffoon. As the Princess Elsbeth tells Fantasio, 'le jour ou tu t'ennuieras d'être poursuivi par tes créanciers . . . tu redeviendras mon buffon pour le temps qu'il te plaira de l'être, et puis tu iras à tes affaires. Maintenant tu peux t'en aller, la porte est ouverte' (p. 323).

'La porte est ouverte': these words characterize this ending. Subjectivity is the solution to the problems of everyday life. The cycle of despair, flight and diversion is left open to infinite repetition. More than in the Tieckian 'play within a play,' where continuity is less directly suggested, the role-playing in Musset's drama can be resumed at will. The sense of the ending has yet, in spite of its circular linkage with the initial situation, moved beyond Romanticism. Artifice triumphs over nature:

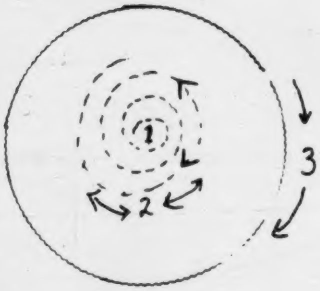
> Comme ce soleil couchant est manqué! La nature est pitoyable ce soir. Regard-moi un peu cette vallee la'bas, ces quatre ou cinq méchants nuages qui grimpent sur cette montagne. Je faisais des paysages comme celui-là, quand j'avais douze ans, sur la couverture de mes livres de classe.
> (I, ii, p. 283)

A possible irony yet overhangs the ending as well as the entire play: Fantasio's life, the reader is well aware, is that of a frivolous gentleman, and the 'open door' to a fairytale court can only be found in a world of pure fantasy.

The distance separating Fantasio and Lorenzaccio (wr. 1833-4; pr. 1834) is far greater than their dates of composition would suggest.

While the former is a scrap of whimsy, and consists in the modish poses of a young man of the Jeunes-France generation, the latter takes on the epic dimensions of a world theatre. The differences are nevertheless those of scope and content rather than structure. Both dramas spiral forth from the individual to embrace the roles of a larger theatre in which the protagnoist is mirrored. The replacement of the 'mental stage' --the processes which evolve within the consciousness of the individual-- with a larger 'world theatre' is, in both works, eminently reversible. Fantasio, for instance, is free to move outward from his mundane existence of lethargy, random philosophizing, and the accumulation of debts, to a surrogate world; obversely, when diversion borders on 'emploi' he can retreat once more.

In Lorenzaccio a similar movement takes place on a much larger stage. The 'centre' exists within the mind and actions of the protagonist. At the same time, the sickness, corruption, idealism, and eventual defeat of the hero are metonymous reflections of the external world; paradoxically, the collage of scenes around and without him are also a reflection and extension of the world within. The spiralling structure is thus far more elaborate and multi-layered than in Fantasio:



1. 'internal stage'
2. 'external stage': Florence
   Italy--France
3. 'world theatre': historical process
   existential plight

One essential difference separates the two dramas: while in Fantasio an all-embracing world theatre is possibly implied, and the never-never-land characteristics of the represented world are in ironic opposition to the receiver's underlying awareness that all is fantasy, the beginning and ending of Lorenzaccio suggest, in their juxtaposition of an old and a new 'disorder,' each one equally corrupt, the circular movement of history. Four levels emerge: the individual, the Florentine, the larger European arena of political intrigue, and the macro-historical, which blend in with the existential. Although in the ending the centre of the cpiral has been eliminated through the death of Lorenzaccio, the larger problems and situations remain unmodified. Tyranny and corruption have merely taken on a new name with the swearing-in of Come de Medicis.

On its most basic level, therefore, the ending of Lorenzaccio exemplifies the circular structure. The Hegelian progression from thesis to antithesis and synthesis, which would constitute a continuation of the inner spiral on the above schema, is absent. No positive progression is indicated. Indirectly Musset's posthumously-published fragment, 'Dieu est plongé dans le sommeil . . .' (Editor's title; undated) confirms the underlying fatalism of the historical process also depicted in his drama:[127]

> Dieu dort et toutes les révolutions physiques, toutes les évolutions des sphères, toutes les créations successives ou simultanées qui amusent son sommeil, ne sont que des apparences. Le Monde est le rêve de Dieu. Quand Dieu s'éveillera, il sera seul dans sa toute-puissante unité. Les apparences retomberont dans leur néant primitif; les simulacres de créations et d'êtres, de globes et de planètes, de systèmes et de vies, s'évanouiront à jamais. Dieu finira de rêver (p. 940).

Viewing the world as a nightmare of a sleeping God endows to the historical process the sense of absurdity or nihilism that also emerges from Lorenzaccio. Romanticism has, in the content of the ending and of the drama in its entirety, lost the sense of questioning that chacacterizes, for instance, Ruy Blas, which postdates Musset's work by four years. While no Utopia and no reanimated social structure evolves from Hugo's drama, the possibility of positive change is not categorically denied. The preface, moreover, supplies indications of a positive vision; whether this exists merely on the level of rhetoric or also of confirmed belief is an open question. In both Lorenzaccio and the above fragment, however, Musset suggests that absurdity is the key-note of life and history. When God awakens, or when the infinite series of illusions that constitute life are dispersed, a great void remains. Transcendence has, with Musset, ceased to be a possibility. Lorenzaccio's reply to Philippe Strozzi's question, ' N'ies-tu l'histoire du monde entier?' (V, ii, p. 191) extends the void into the contours of history: 'Je ne nie pas l'histoire, mais je n'y étais pas.' In other words, we are not only poor students of our own past, but also, no meaning can be derived from a series of absurdities. This idea is confirmed and reinforced two scenes later in the chatter of the silk merchant, to whom history has deteriorated into a mere game with numbers (V, v, pp. 194-5); to the republican Strozzi and the corrupt Salviati, political and ideological conflict has become a scuffle in the streets, performed to the background mumble of pedants discussing inanities.

Ironic reversal is also inherent in the collage of scenes that compose the ending. One major action, Lorenzaccio's murder of Alexandre, represents both the culminating event and the introductory motif to the group of final situations. The assassination, which has formed the protagonist's raison d'être, has been the one goal of his life:

> Il faut que je l'avoue, si la Providence m'a poussé à la resolution de tuer un tyran, quel qu'il fût; l'orgeuil m'a pousse aussi. Que je dirais-je de plus? tous les Césars du monde me faisaient penser à Brutus (III, iii).

The deed, once accomplished, results only in a network of ironies. To Philippe Strozzi's ecstatic cry of 'La liberté est donc sauvée!' (V, ii, p. 189) Lorenzo can only reply, 'il n'y a rien de sauvé que moi qui ai les reins brises par les chevaux . . . .' The event has gone unnoticed: 'je l'aurai dit, je crois, à la lune, tant j'étais sûr de n'être pas écouté' (p. 190). Humanity is incapable of action: 'il y en a très peu de très méchants, beaucoup de lâches, et un grand nombre d'indifférents' (p. 191). The greatest disillusionment exists, however, within the protagonist, for, having accomplished the deed to which his life has been dedicated, he is 'plus creux et plus vide qu'une statue de fer-blanc' (p. 200).

Other manifestations of irony are wound into the flash of scenes that follow the introductory motif. The parallel intrigue, that of the Marquise de Cibo's sacrifice of her 'virtue' in an attempt to convert Alexandre to political idealism, has also been still-born. Only her integrity has suffered. Inadvertently, the accomplishment of Lorenzo's mission has, moreover, profited the one antagonist who has seen through his ruse, that of winning the Duke's trust by playing the role of the depraved 'Lorenzaccio.' By ridding the state of Alexandre, the protagonist has played directly into the hands of the Archbiship Cibo, who craftily consolidates his influence during the interregnum. On yet another level, the monologue of Pierre Strozzi serves as an ironic replay of the ambiguities underlying Lorenzo's motivations: 'Maudit soit ce Lorenzaccio, qui s'avise de devenir quelque chose!' (V, iv, p. 194), he curses. Obliquely an ironic commentary on the nature of heroism is posed: are acts of so-called temerity, ostensibly aimed at the public good, merely attempts of the ego to assert itself? A variation of superbia is still at the root of the romantic historical drama.

In one sense, the movement outward from the individual to the world theatre is thus once more aimed inward. Action for the sake of an ideal is first a form of self-assertion, and second, the self becomes the victim of his own nature and of the world theatre. By the same token, integrity cannot be maintained in a cosmic drama where the actor fuses with his role: 'La vice a été pour moi un vêtement, maintenant il est collé à ma peau' (III, i, p. 139). A small distance separates the romantic consciousness here from that of Luigi Pirandello's Enrico IV (perf., pr. 1922). From the Baroque Era to the Romantics to the twentieth century, the mask of the actor's role is inseparable from the face it at first conceals.

The question remains whether the all-infusing irony of the ending constitutes, according to our definition, an ironic reversal. In one sense, the irony of Musset's drama has already gone beyond its romantic manifestations. As in the works of Grabbe, Büchner, and Beddoes, it verges on the grotesque and eventually borders on nihilism. René Bourgeois formulates:

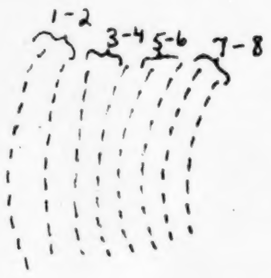
> . . . le miroir 'ironique' ne se borne pas à renvoyer une image, mais dans cette image s'insère un miroir réflechi, et cela à l'infini. C'est que l'auteur regarde le personnage qu'il crée, et le trouve

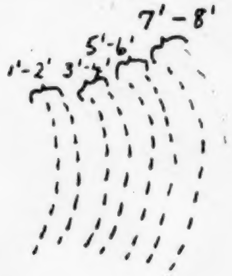
> semblable à lui, mais différent aussi; et il fait en sorte que ce personnage se regarde à son tour, et se dédouble par jeu, ce qui donne encore une autre image, semblable et differente.[128]

In one sense, this process of mirroring and re-mirroring does take place in the ending of Lorenzaccio and, in the suggestion that the historical process will continue to repeat itself, fuses with circularity. What seems to contradict the 'romantic' process of irony is, however, the insidious and inerasable identification of the player with his role. While Lorenzaccio is the voice of ironic awareness, he is yet equally aware that he has become the character he had once pretended to be; with the Marquise, even this perspicacity is lacking. Vestiges of the original face beneath the mask yet remain, and the very awareness of transformation constitutes a brief dropping of the disguise. Concurrently, the ethos of the ending comes indeed close to suggesting an existential void, a universe created by the nightmares of a sleeping God, which will vanish with the 'awakening' of destruction. Nevertheless, irony so infuses the ending of the drama that the 'ironic reversal' does play a major structural role.

Throughout our examination, reference has been made to the collage structure of the drama as a whole and of the ending. This is again bound in with the circularity of the work. The first scene, for instance, reveals Alexandre de Médicis and Lorenzo in action: an abduction is in progress. By implication and through the obloquy of Maffio (I, i, p. 54), a tableau is drawn of the 'something rotten in the state of Florence.' In a swift progression of collages, the outside frame now focuses on first the chatter of the silk-merchant and the goldsmith, then the schoolboys, then Louise Strozzi and her would-be seducer amid a group of courtiers, and finally, the Cibo intrigue. Only with the fourth scene, after the Duke's counsellors have warned him against Lorenzo, does the core intrigue involving Alexandre and the protagonist once more resume.

Similarly, the final set of collages echoes in situation and theme the collage progression of the beginning in an inverted order. The first scene of Act V opens in turmoil as the court discusses the murder of the previous night. In a parallel to the second collage of I, iv, where Lorenzo's character and potential for treason are put to the test, the second scene of this act presents the lengthy conversation and self-analysis of Lorenzo and Philippe. The brief monologue of Pierre Strozzi in his military expedition against the Medici parallels the interlude with Louise Strozzi and Salviati, while Scene Three presents the 'ending' to the Cibo affair. The journey in reverse now focuses briefly on the silk merchant and goldsmith to return again to the schoolboy unit. The abduction of Maffei's sister in the opening scene of Act One parallels the sixth scene of Act Five where, in a reversal of roles, Lorenzo is seized and murdered by a group of ransom-seekers. The final collage component, the swearing-in of the new but old corruption, serves as an ironic answer to Maffei's passionate condemnation of the state. Diagrammatically, the collage-parallels of the beginning and the ending can be represented in four groups of two components on each side. It will be observed that the following schema is a variation on that of *La Maréchale d'Ancre* and, in the sixth chapter, of Tieck's *Genoveva*.





1--2: Abduction: condemnation of the state.
3--4: Silk merchant, goldsmith, schoolboys.
5--6: Strozzi, Cibo.
7--8: Counsellors' warning; testing of Lorenzo.

7'--8': 'abduction'; death; state
5'--6': merchants, schoolboys.
3'--4': Strozzi, Cibo.
1'--2': counsellors; self-analysis of hero.

One more structure may be observed in the final scene. Musset's 'armchair stage' directions are: 'Ils [Côme and the Cardinal] s'avancent vers le peuple. On entend Côme parler dans l'éloignement' (V, vii, p. 203). Apart from the inherent irony of hypocritical oaths sworn upon the Bible by a future tyrant--as historical records confirm--a tableau structure also emerges. In spite of the absence of closing stage directions, the view expands to include a mass scene and, as the voices fade away, it is conceiveable that the stances are held. On the mental and theatrical stage, the final picture symbolizes both the futility of the preceding action and the recurrence of the historical cycle.

The final drama by Musset to be here examined shrinks the dimensions of the world theatre to focus on a sharply-defined inter-personal conflict. The 'proverbe' On ne badine pas avec l'amour (pr. 1834; perf. 1861) may be described as a potential comedy which ends in a tragedy. In this way, it inverts both the traditional melodrama, a potential tragedy with a positive ending--at least for the virtuous characters--and the form of La Nuit vénitienne. Ironic reversal is for this reason an essential component of Musset's ending. From another point of view, the 'badiner' with love, which precipitates the outcome, resembles the crossing of electrical wires, and the climactic ending, the resulting short-circuit. Lafoscade describes the process as 'des courbes fortes ou légères, parfois peu attendues, pour finir par l'angle droit de la fin.' Concerning the generic designation of the drama, he refuses to pass judgement: 'Tant pis pour la classification, et tant pis pour la logique! Avec Musset, nous pouvons nous en passer.'[130]

One modification should, however, be made to the above statement. Although the size of the caste and the many scenic changes exceed the traditional limitations of the 'proverbe,' a genre created for performance in the drawing room by amateurs, the subtitle is nevertheless significant.[131] Musset's play is indeed the working-out and demonstration of the theme contained in the proverb of the title: 'On ne badine pas avec l'amour.' In this sense the ending, as Lafoscade maintains, does indeed narrow to a point and, to an extent atypical of the romantic drama, self-consciously supports the opening thesis. On this level, the drama forms a closed unit which, with the outcome, decisively snaps shut.

An ending can yet, as Lorenzaccio and many other dramas have already exemplified, be both open and closed; for this reason, among others, we have not made use of the distinction between the 'open' and 'closed' ending as propounded by Volker Klotz and other theoreticiams.[132] Although the intrigue of On ne badine pas is economically developed toward a clear demonstration of the theme, the outcome yet hands on the crest of a coup de théâtre. The terse closing words, 'Elle est morte. Adieu, Perdican!' represent the final situation, Rosette's death and Camille's departure. At this point the text ends and the curtain falls, presumably--although no stage directions are given--on a tableau of the shocked protagonist. Motion and emotion are thereby suspended, and the sequel lies on the other side of the curtain or in the space that succeeds the printed page, i.e., with the reader or spectator. A series of basic questions also hangs in suspense: how has Rosette died? What determines Camille's departure? What does Perdican do next?

The intrigue of _On ne badine pas avec l'amour_ consists basically, as the title suggests, of a game played with love. A mass of concealments, intercepted letters, contrived assignations, love tokens exchanged and thrown away, and manipulative ploys develops the action, to the point that an array of the cliched situations of a love comedy are employed. That the outcome does not represent a 'married and happily ever after' motif constitutes a major element of the ironic reversal. In effect, the ending reflects ironically upon the content of the conventional comedy, suggesting that the seeming frivolity of the plot is actually no laughing matter. The abrupt transformation of the raw material of comedy into the content for a tragic ending thus both contrasts and compares the two genres.

Careful structuring underlies the apparent abruptness and wilfulness of the ending. From this perspective, Musset is both romantic and non-romantic. In _Hernani_, for instance, the _Liebestod_ of the lovers, although a sudden reversal of the harmony established in the fourth act, is also prefigured by the dark fate said to overhang the hero and the recurring motif of the death wager with Ruy Gomez. These foreshadowings of the outcome, however, emerge in a collage-like fashion only to sink away until they next resurface. _On ne badine pas_, however, carefully develops the intrigue in a process of layering and staggering. Warning signals about the possible dire consequences of a simultaneous involvement on the part of the hero with both Camille and Rosette increase in frequency with each act.

Structurally, therefore, Musset's drama resembles a pyramid turned upside-down. Initially it balances lightly on the 'peak' of comedy. Already, however, the last scene of the first act sounds a warming signal which serves to amke the balance precarious: 'Il[Perdican] tient sous le bras une jeune paysanne . . . . Il ramassait des cailloux pour faire des ricochets' (I, v, p. 33). The ending is indeed a ricochet. The seond act compounds the warming signals. This time the first one occurs a scene earlier than in the previous act: 'Or, un homme qui recherche en public une gardeuse de dindons peut être soupçonné violemment d'être né pour les garder lui-même' (II, iv, p. 353). This is followed by the first assignation of Perdican and Camille, the only 'innocent' meeting, where no spectator is hidden on the scene.

The third and final act, consisting of eight scenes instead of five, structurally intensifies the end-directed elements of the drama. Three more rendez-vous take place: the first between Rosette and Perdican with Camille as the 'staged' spectator; the second and third, between Camille and Perdican, with Rosette hidden behind the scenes, the first time be design, and the second time, by chance. Each episode increases in gravity and causes the weight of the reversed pyramid to teeter on its precarious fulcrum. While the first meeting merely leaves Camille somewhat shaken and inspires her to destroy brutally her rival's illusions, the next has more serious consequences, causing Rosette to faint in the closet where she has been hidden.

No elaborate preparations in the way of intercepted letters are needed to prepare the third 'act' of the mini-theatre within the theatre. Having reassured Rosette of his love and reaffirmed their engagement, Perdican hastens after Camille in the chapel, which serves as the ironic counterpart to the salon setting of the ending of this proverbe. The protagonist needs only to declare to his cousin 'nous nous aimons,' when '*on entend un grand cri derrièrel'autel*!' (III, viii, p. 387).

The structure of the ending, although climactic, contains echoes of conventional tragic and comic form. Revelation, for instance, does indeed develop from the introductory motif. For Camille, this consists of a perfunctory, 'Hélas! tout cela est cruel,' as she rushes off to see to Rosette. For the less self-centred Perdican, a direct admission of guilt ensues: 'Nous avons joué avec la vie et la mort' (p. 388). The protagonist's next words are, however, less incisive: to maintain that 'notre coeur est pur,' and in the same breath to promise a husband and wealth to Rosette belies the depth of his insight. His prayer constitutes, in effect, an imagined ideal ending, suitable for a comedy. Praying to a 'Dieu juste' that Rosette should not die, and that the deity should 'bénir encore quatre de [ses] enfants' is a vain gesture. The brief outcome provides a flat 'no' to his prayers.

'Elle est morte. Adieu, Perdican.' The ending consists in these words. Adroitly they contain at least four levels of meaning. First, they express Camille's intention to retreat 'à Dieu' in her convent. Adept at the game of courtship, she runs away in fright when the illusion gives way to reality. On the second level, the ending semantically refers to Perdican's prayer 'à Dieu.' The third level is suggested by the terseness of the final words and the silence which succeeds them. As in Une Caprice de Marianne, the theatre of illusion has been built upon and furnished by words. Only Rosette, whose prepared speech begging Perdican to stop toying with her (III, vii, p. 385) is the longest she utters, has known and revealed her true feelings. When action shatters the verbal theatre, Perdican and Camille are left speechless. In this way, the ending is not only ironic reversal of an incipient comedy, but also an eloquent but silent response to the words and actions of the text. Simultaneously, its climactic elements direct a series of questions beyond the limits of the represented action. Like Lorenzaccio, On ne badine pas avec l'amour leaves, by means of its ending, a terrifying problem unresolved. Limited in scope, beginning in the guise of comedy, it asks whether the pyramid, once toppled by the weight of human folly, can be rebuilt. On the fourth level, the last word of the drama is 'Perdican,' suggestive of 'le perdu,' the man who has 'lost' in the game of both love and life.

The careful structuring of the outcome in On ne badine pas avec l'amour is not, however, accidental, but implies a transition in Musset's work. His remaining dramas, from La Quenouille de Barbarine and Le Chandelier (wr., pr. 1835) onward announce the completion of this change. W. D. Howarth summarizes:

> . . . after 1834 his comedies never again showed the same degree of subjective involvement; while the move towards a kind of comedy equally imaginative and 'Shakespearean' as regards setting, but lacking this introspective, confessional quality (atype exemplified by La Quenouille de Barberine, Carmosine and Bettine) was to be followed in its turn by a move away from the world of the imagination towards the realistic portrayal of contemporary society; from a poet's theatre towards the documentary 'slice of life.'[134]

The reconciliatory tableau of Un Caprice and the concluding commentary confirm the dimensions of the above-indicated change in the context of closure:

> Je vous demande pardon, madame, elle le saura, et je n'oublierai jamais pour ma part qu'un jeune curé fait les meilleurs sermons (vi, p. 650).

The diversity and rapid development of Musset's closural practice reflects the precocity of his nature. At a time when the romantic drama has barely begun to penetrate the French stage, he already extends and parodies its contents and structures. Correspondingly, his 'later' dramas, if such a distinction can be made when closural structures change radically within less than a year, are among the first to announce the resurfacing of the time-worn rules of dramatic composition.

## 12. The Exit from the Theatre: 1839-52.

More than German or English romantic closure, that of the French movement leaves itself open to erosion. A statement such as Antony's 'Elle me résistait--je l'ai assassinée' rapidly becomes stylized. In the hands of a prolific dramatist who increasingly begins to follow the recipes of melodrama, its bit will, like that of the German Schicksalstragodie, soon be replaced by mere bark.

In an age, moreover, where the superficial poses of Romanticism, such as the cult of emotion, superheroic stances, and exoticism, rapidly become public property, but the ethos and aesthetics are subject to constant attack and disapprobation, the proponents of a radically transformed drama wage a losing battle. The effect of censorship on the ending of André del Sarto is a prime example.

With the end of the 1830's and the beginning of the next decade, signals of a renewed upsurge of the traditional structures and content of closure are evident. Already with Musset this has been prefigured. The prelude to a definitive shift may well be provided by the vogue of the tragedeian Rachel. Maurice Souriau summarizes that 'la jeune tragédienne ranime le vieux répertoire, qui n'était pas mort, qui était en simple léthargie depuis la disparition de Talma.'[135] The revival of Corneille and Racine finally prompts Gautier, the staunchest defender of the romantic drama, to write regretfully that 'en ressuscitant la vieille tragédie morte, elle [Mlle Rachel] enraya le grand mouvement romantique qui eut peut-être doté la France d'une forme nouvelle de drame.'[136]

One example of a stylized climactic ending among the romantic faithful is found in Gérard de Nerval's Léo Burckhart (wr. 1838; perf. 1839). Nerval's dramatic beginnings had, of course, come at an early age with his translation of Goethe's Faust I (pr. 1828), followed in 1840 by a translation of the 'Prologue' and 'Helen' episodes of Faust II, with an 'Examen analytique' of the rest. The earlier Faust drama, as we have noted in Chapter Six, ends climactically. Nerval's translation, apart from the occasional philological blunder (weeded out in successive editions) and a few instances of awkwardness, painstakingly follows the original.[137] Between the Faust I publication and Léo Burckhart come a handful of works written for the operatic stage or, in collaboration with Alexandre Dumas père, for the popular theatre. The final scenes of L'Alchimiste (perf. 1839) and Piquillo (1837) are not, however, the work of Nerval, according to Jean Richer.[138]

Of Léo Burckhart an enthusiastic review by Vauclare in Le Monde Dramatique states that, in this political drama--a subject not entirely to the liking of contemporary audiences--'on rencontre des scènes admirables d'énergie et de conception . . . .'[139] This view, particularly with reference to the ending, is not fully justified, in spite of Gautier's similarly laudatory assessment. Like the outcome of Hugo's Cromwell, the outcome is not organically linked with the drama as a whole. In following the career of a German politician during the student unrest of 1819, Nerval creates a series of collage-sketches of student life and the problems of a liberal legislator in preserving his integrity. A typological parallel to the Vehmgericht motif in Scott's House of Aspen occurs with the chilling trial by proxy where the co-hero is chosen to assassinate Leo. Concurrently, a sub-plot has focused on the marital conflict between Burckhart and his neglected wife, and the attempts of a former lover to revive the pre-marital relationship. This sub-intrigue, a relatively small part of the drama, supplies the closing motifs. The co-hero Frantz, in love with Marguerite but delegated to assassinate her husband, attempts to provoke a duel with Léo on the pretense that an adulterous affair has been conducted between him and the wife. Marguerite, however, intervenes, nobly defending her virtue and reaffirming her devotion to Léo. Frantz, simultaneously shamed, disconsolate, and politically defeated, leaves. No sooner is he gone than Marguerite remarks, 'Oh! mon ami . . . c'est un homme de coeur pourtant, et nous l'avons trop humilié . . . (On entend un coup de pistolet) (IV, vi, p. 334, 335). To this Léo astutely replies: 'Tenez . . . le voilà qui se relève.' This somewhat lame attempt to conclude the work climactically has the effect merely of closing off one arm of a tributary.

It could be maintained facetiously that the failure of Hugo's *Les Burgraves* (wr., perf. 1843) is as crucial an event as the *bataille d'Hernani*, for, just as 1830 represents the pinnacle of the romantic drama's assault on the stage, so 1843 marks its slow exit. With a host of Titanic figures, each of which represents an abstraction (Guanhumara, Revenge; Barbarossa, Forgiveness; Regina, Innocence; Otbert, Honour), Hugo seeks to transform the drama into an allegorical epic which incorporates a symbolic victory, that of Good over Evil.

For the first time in the theatre of Hugo, with the possible exception of *Marie Tudor*, we encounter a positive, reconciled ending. Jean Massin's 'Presentation' in the chronological edition of Hugo's collected works dwells on the singularity of this occurrence:

> Si l'on compare l'avenir d'Otbert à celui de Didier, de Hernani, de Gennaro, de Ruy Blas . . .--ou plutôt à leur manque d'avenir--et aux fins, plus tragiques encore dans leur jumelage privé de tout amour reçu, de Claude Frollo et de Quasimode, la libération apparaît éclatante' (VI, p. 563).

This is, Massin goes on to state, all the more astonishing in that 'de tous les heros hugoliens, Job est sans doute celui dont la situation est la pire avant même que le drame ne commence' (VI, p. 563).

The reasons for this about-face to reconciled closure are no doubt compound. Massin conjectures that the price of reconciliation in *Les Burgraves*, that of 's'effacer devant son fils' (VI, p. 559) is tantamount to '[une] tentation . . . dans l'âge mûr, de rêver à devenir son propre fils comme, dans la jeunesse, on a rêvé de devenir son propre père.' In the ending he thus sees an imaginative father-son transference on the part of Hugo. This view unfortunately necessitates the espousal of a limited and limiting methodology of criticism before the hypothesis can be affirmed or rejected. From another perspective, it may be argued simply that Hugo has moved to bring his theory and practice closer together. Ruy Blas, for instance, contradicts in its outcome the argument of the preface. The drama does not demonstrate the rise of the untitled classes; rather, the hero's genius, unaided by a false title, avails him little. The ending of Les Burgraves, by way of contrast, attempts to incorporate a similar vision to that articulated in the Preface, a glorious future where, in 'le magnifique rêve de l'intelligence,' mankind has 'pour patrie le monde et pour nation l'humanité' (VI, p. 575). This is, moreover, part of a larger development in the ethos of Hugo's works, as Howarth points out. Leaning increasingly 'toward the superhuman,' Hugo incorporates 'themes of retribution and expiation, the nature of evil, and human progress,' not only in Les Burgraves but also in his later Contemplations and La Légende des siecles, of which the first two books appear in 1859.[140]

Théophile Gautier, once the chronicler of the romantic triumph on the stage, begins more and more to observe its ebb. He shrewdly notes and assesses the change in the tastes of theatre-goers. Referring to Dumas père's Lorenzino (1842), he comments that 'le goût du parterre n'est plus tourné maintenant au moyen age; il n'accepte guère que la comédie en poudre et le drame en frac.'[141] The same public that had ten years ago avidly watched La Tour de Nesle is now, 'accoutumé qu'il est aux façons bourgeoises et courantes de M. Scribe,' shocked at the 'violence et la force' of Dumas' drama.[142] This observation reaffirms on a general level the change we have detected in closure.

Even Gautier does not seek in his own dramatic experiments to maintain a tradition whose passing he regrets in his criticism. In the 'mystery play' Une Larme de Diable (wr. c. 1836; pr. 1839), the ironic distance turned upon his own work separates him from his older contemporaries and allies him with Musset and the German Romantics. His little-known drama is a delightful reworking and parody of Faust I. In no uncertain terms, it merits the same prominence as the comedies of Tieck, Kleist, Büchner, Grabbe, Raimund and Nestroy. Its 'serious' dimensions arise from its self-reflecting elements which address the very nature of the theatre and the sender-actor-role-receiver relationship. Closure is included in the series of problems it touches. 'Le Bon Dieu,' for instance, has promised Satanas a glass of water to quench his corrosive thirst--only, however, if the demon can seduce two young maidens. The spectator is therefore God, who obligingly, when a deus ex machina is required, creates 'tout expres un météore de la couleur et de la forme de la lune' in his eagerness to see the ending: 'car je veux voir la fin de cette comédie, et je ne veux pas faire manquer le dénouement pour si peu de chose.'[143] In the next scene, the author, Grabbe-like, steps into the outcome of his own work to conduct a monologue on the problems of directing 'ce drame, quoique certainement un des plus beaux qui aient jamais serpenté à travers les circonvolutions d'une cervelle humaine' (p. 47) toward the outcome. This 'serpentine' drama may well represent the form of the romantic play by extension. The author, hoping for 'des effets très-agréables à cause du contraste,' finds himself in a 'cul-de sac' [sic] with a drama he cannot untie! The final trick is, however, played by God. Gretchen-like, the Devil's first 'conquest' has been 'sauvée,' in an echo of Nerval's Faust translation. The soft-hearted Magdalena, supported by the Virgin, nevertheless begs the deity to resurrect Satanas. That Gautier closes with a question-mark may well be yet another ironic reflection of romantic practice: 'Dans quelque cent mille ans d'ici, nous verrons' (xvii, p. 48).

In 1846 Gautier decided upon what had at this time become an exotic experiment: to reconstruct an old-fashioned melodrama, a genre whose passing he regretted (La Presse, 8 aout 1843). La Juive de Constantinople (perf., pr. 1846) does not, however, employ the unequivocally positive ending of the traditional melodrama and should therefore be modified by the adjective 'romantic.' As Claude Book-Senninger points out, the traitress whose death occurs in the outcome is not entirely evil. The multi-toned characterization and its corresponding effect on the ending, she conjectures, may have contributed to the cold reception accorded the work.[144] This detail only reconfirms that the structures and functions of romantic closure, never entirely accepted, had by now become unacceptable.

French drama moves from the great romantic failure of Hugo to the new sensation, Ponsard's Lucrèce, within the same year. As 'the first important expression of the ethical ideas that were to be associated with "l'école du bon sens,"' this drama yet does not survive for more than one season.[145] Dealing with the Tarquin's ravishment of the only Roman wife who, while her husband has been away at war, spins wool instead of carousing, this drama is fraught with an elevating example. After her violation, Lucrece commits suicide, all the while proclaiming the power of her example to other less devoted wives. This in turn provides her husband Brutus with the determination to overthrow the corrupt Tarquins. In his objective but unenthusiastic review, Gauthier observes that 'la figure de Lucrèce a naturellement peu d'animation; elle est blanche et froide comme le neige de Soracte.'[145] This lack of animation extends to the sequel and commentary.

While the die-hard Romantics may not be entirely aware of the revolutionary structure and function of their own closure practice, the Biedermeier-like ethos resurfacing from the ranks of the popular middle-class drama does not go unnoticed. Scribe regains his pre-eminence, much to the chagrin of Gautier, who summarizes the maxims to be derived from his contemporary's worthy dramas; 'Évitez les mariages d'inclination! Il est bon de faire fructifier l'argent! On doit toujours penser à soi. L'enthousiasme est ridicule. He trompez pas votre femme parce que cela est incommode. N'ayez pas de maîtresse parce qu'elles sont difficile à quitter et peuvent nuire plus tard à votre position.'[147] Interestingly, the Victorian poet Arthur Clough attacks the bourgeois morality of convenience in his 'New Decameron' (1859) in similar terms, revealing that the same problem takes on different variations. Although these criticisms make no mention of closure, it is well to recall that the ethical 'message' is preponderently inserted into the dramatic ending.

From Scribe and Ponsard to Emile Augier (*L'Aventurière*, 1848, and *Gabrielle*, 1849) to Dumas *fils* (*Le Demi-Monde*, 1855 and *Les Idées de Madame d'Aubray*, 1861), the didactic tones sound clearly. Two transitional plays, however, demand brief mention: *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas *fils* (1852) and Balzac's *Mercadet* (1851). In Balzac's play, the exclamatory rhetoric characteristic of the romantic ending is represented in the closing scenes, as at frequent points throughout the drama, by means of exclamation points and distracting series of dots.[148] The outcome yet manages to turn the tables, much to the advantage of Mercadet, now a parvenu, in a neat 'touché!' As in Bulwer-Lytton's Money cited in the previous chapter, the focus of the work has now turned to the pocketbook.

La Dame aux camélias, outwardly still romantic, deals with the pathos-ridden story of a courtesan's relationship with a young man of good social standing--a plot now better-known in Verdi's La Traviata. Of this ending, Howarth aptly comments that 'the play ends on a thoroughly Romantic note with the deathbed idealization of Marguerite; and the emotional climax of the lovers' reunion, leading to the curtain-line "Dors en paix, Marguerite! il te sera beaucoup pardonné, parce que tu as beaucoup aimé!" is a powerful challenge to the intellectual conviction with which the moral argument has earlier been presented.'[149] The 'intellectual conviction' to which Howarth refers is that of R. J. Clark in his 1972 edition of the drama. His view states that 'the play is profoundly anti-Romantic,' since 'social morality emerges triumphant.'[150] In our opinion, one stance should be modified by the other. The closing words of Nichette ('Dors en paix . . . .') offer a benediction in the structure of a brief commentary. Although Armand is left in shock and pain, asking, 'Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! que vais-je devenir? . . . .'[151] other factors must also be taken into account. That Marguerite has indeed rediscovered the strength of her love and nobly sacrificed self-interest for the sake of Armand's family serve to condition the atmosphere of peace and approbation presiding over the heroine's death-bed. A Marion de Lorme, Adèle, or Tisbe would scarcely have warranted such praise in the post-romantic era.

At the same time, neither the romantic influence nor the closural structures favoured by the Romantics entirely disappear from the theatre. In April, 1850 the Théâtre Porte Saint Martin produced Toussaint Louverture (wr. 1839-40), a 'poème dramatique' by one of the oldest living Romantics, Alphonse de Lamartine. The drama ends in a furor of activity. Louverture, motionless with grief, abruptly leaps up at the attendant monk's statement that 'ce sang fume entre un monde et l'autre!'[152] Seizing the national flag, he cries out 'd'une voix terrible,' 'Aux Armes!!!' The climactic gesture gives way to a giant tableau of a pitched battle, the outcome of which is left in suspense. The contrast between this ending and that of an earlier but unstaged drama, Saül (wr. 1812-18, pr. 1861) with its conventional commentary reveals that Lamartine has moved with the closural tendencies of his time.

## 13. Conclusion.

The French romantic drama has served as the final major building-block in our aim to set up a typology of closure in the serious drama of the early nineteenth century. The results of this last area of investigation are the most varied and the most telling of the three chief language-groups treated in our study. The signposts of change are, in the wake of the Revolution, indeed wavering. The inheritance of the drame bourgeois, the pre-romantic upsurge of sensibility, the tableau theory propounded and demonstrated by Diderot and the Sentimentalists, the cataclysmic effects of the Revolution and the Napoleonic years, and the liberating influence of the evolution of the melodrama as an autonomous genre all serve, however, to modify the structures and functions of closure. In an inversion of the German pattern, theory is in this area, with Constant and Mme de Staël, ahead of closural practice. The French drama, with its relatively slow movement away from the Classicist conventions of the ending, thus provides an excellent opportunity to trace the roots of change and to assess to what extent the aesthetics and ethos of Romanticism are responsible for the undoing of outmoded practice. In this way, French Romanticism serves to confirm and extend the observations that have already been drawn from the German and English romantic drama in the course of our examination. The deeply-rooted norms of dramatic construction in France allow the romantic closural revolution to emerge in a more clear-cut form than in our two other main languages, where the example of the Elizabethan age and the Sturm und Drang has already spurred innovation onward.

As with the German and English, the radical development of new closural models in France coincides with Romanticism. Here, however, textbook chronology should be adopted with caution. The preface to Cromwell and the bataille d'Hernani tend to overshadow, in conventional rewritings of dramatic history, the appreciable changes accomplished with the 'sub-literary' drama, the Napoleonic stage, the scène historique, Constant, Mérimée and Vigny.

While types of 'climactic' ending and symbolic tableau are visible in the later developments of the medodrama, the underlying ethos still appears to offer some means of differentiation. Except in instances of 'ironic reversal,'--and here it may be conjectured that the genre has been romanticized--a clear-cut distinction still exists between 'good' and 'evil.' While the climactic, collage, circular, ironic reversal and tableau structures are employed among the Romantics to reveal on-going tensions, suspense, alienation, shock, despair, the fusion or inversion of ethical values, concern over a historical and existential situation which impedes all positive development, intra- and intertexual criticism, and, in certain instances, an ethos bordering on nihilism, closural structures in the popular theatre reinforce bourgeois values and absolute standards of good and evil.

As with the German and English drama of the first half of the nineteenth century, our concept of the theatrical and dramatic life of France during this period is indeed limited if only the upper stratum, that of 'literature and theatre' proper, is examined. For purposes of comparison and contrast, much that is taken for granted in our conventional views of Romanticism will emerge as 'typical' or 'atypical' of the movement when the entire hierarchy of systems within a given historical context is examined.

The study of closure among the French Romantics leads to a keener assessment of the individual tendencies within the group. Of the major names of the French movement, affinities in the structure and function of the ending and its implied ethos have tended to link Vigny, Musset and Gautier with their German contemporaries or predecessors. On the other hand, Dumas and Hugo, while closer to stage practice, are nearer to the melodramatic tradition; dramatists such as Mérimée, Musset and Gautier also evince a tendency to adapt and build upon Spanish and French baroque themes and structure.

Our outline of the historical development of closure among the French Romantics reveals, moreover, a similar progression to those earlier noted in the German and English movements. The sense of the ending becomes increasingly dynamic and rejects more and more the concept of definitive harmony. Past, present and future are infused with ongoing tension. Questions are indirectly posed to the receiver. In this respect, the silence that succeeds the performance or the space that follows the printed page becomes an integral part of the ending. The dramatic text leaves, moreover, room for the interpretation of the actor and the imagination of the receiver by means of terse dialogue, suggestive imagery, and frequent demands for movement and gesture. As the climactic and tableau structures tend to fuse with melodramatic practice, the emphasis on character and suggestion begins to decrease. The ending adopts a contrived quality. In this way, it leaves itself open to irony and parody.

Once the French romantic movement has settle more firmly within the new structures, modes and themes with which it has uprooted tradition, the auto-critical manifestations of irony become more frequent. The dramatist employs the ending to relativise or mock his own closure practice, that of his predecessors and contemporaries, and the ethos, poses, and ideals of the movement itself. While this ironic process appears to be a late development, Mérimée and Musset are notable early exceptions. This form of 'ironic reversal' is, however, related to the more general and possibly more widespread use of the structure, where the content of the ending questions or contradicts that of the remainder of the text.

One closural feature has emerged with particular clarity from our study of the structures and functions of the ending in French drama of the first half of the nineteenth century: that the outcome among the Romantics is indeed distinct in both ethos and structure from that of the popular and 'officially sanctioned' drama, with the partial exception of melodrama. At the same time, the characteristic French structures and functions of closure form a typological unit with those of the English and German romantic drama.[153]

# NOTES

[1] Théophile Gautier, Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans (Paris: Hetzel, 1858), I, p. 126.

[2] Maurice Descotes, Le Drame romantique et ses grands créateurs (1827-1839) (Paris: Publications Universitaires de France, 1955), p. 5.

[3] René Bougeois et Jean Mallion, Le Theatre au XIX$^{e}$ siecle, Emsembles litteraires (Paris: Masson, 1971), pp. 5-6; p. 5.

[4] Gerard de Nerval, La Vie du theatre, in Oeuvres complémentaires de Gerard de Nerval, textes réunis et présentés par Jean Richer, Nouvelle Bibliothèque Nervalienne (n.p.: Lettres Modernes [M. J. Minard], 1961) II, p. 452.

[5] Victor Hugo, Oeuvres complètes, ed. chronologique, dir. Jean Massin (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1967), II, p.

[6] Nerval, II, p. 480.

[7] Bourgeois and Mallion, p. 10.

[8] See A. Lieby, Étude sur le théâtre de M.-J. Chenier (Paris, 1901), cited by W. D. Howarth, Sublime and Grotesque: A Study of French Romantic Drama (London: Harrap, 1975), p. 48.

[9] 'Notice sur Chénier' in Chefs-d'oeuvre tragiques de Ducis, Chénier, Legouvé, Luce de Lancival, Lemercier, ed. anon. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1855) II, p. 224. The text supplied in this anthology will be used for citations from Charles IX.

[10] Chefs-d'oeuvre tragiques II, (II, i), p. 291. Future references will be incorporated in the text, and refer to this edition.

[11] Ducis (no source given) cited in Theodore Muret's L'Histoire par le théâtre: 1789-1851 (Première série: La Revolution, le consulat, l'empire) (Paris: Amyot, 1865), pp. 213-14.

[12] Correspondance de Napoléon Ier (Paris: 1862) X, pp. 466-7, cited by Thieltges, p. 40.

[13] The ending of Cyrus (1804) in Muret, I, p. 210. Access to the entire text of this drama has not so far been possible.

[14] Chefs-d'oeuvres tragiques II, (V, v) p. 371.

[15] On 'Epochenepigonentum,' see Manfred Windfuhr, 'Der Epigone, Begriff, Phänomen, Bewußtsein,' Archiv fur Begriffsgeschichte 4 (1958-9) 194-6.

[16] Peter Brooks, 'Melodrama and Romantic Dramatization,' Chapter Four of his Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 82-3.

[17] Howarth, Sublime and Grotesque, pp. 52-3.

[18] The foundations of this historical-typological overview have already been laid in the bibliographical notes accompanying Chapter Seven. In addition, I am indebted to Roger Bauer (Universität Munchen) for the suggestion that subliterary (melodramatic) and literary elements may fuse in the structures and functions of romantic closure. Apart from the critical-historical references already made in our previous chapter, the following works deal more specifically with the French melodrama: James Smith Allen, Popular French Romanticism: Authors, Readers and Books in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1981); J. Follain, 'Le Mélodrame,' in Entretiens sur la paralittérature, ed. Noel Arnaud et al. (Paris: Plon, 1970), a pejorative approach; Paul Cinisty, Le Mélodrame, Bibliothèque Théâtrale Illustrée (Paris: Michaud, 1910); G. Signaux et P. A. Touchard, Le Mélodrame, 2 vols (Évreux: Le Cercle du Bibliophile, 1969); Pierre Silvain, Mélodrame (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); see also the article of Alexis Pitou, 'Les Origines du mélodrame français à la fin du XVIIIème siècle,' Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, 18 (juin 1911), 256-96; Boris Tomaševsky, 'Frantsuzkaya Melodrama nachala XIX veka,' [French Melodrama of the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century], Poetika 3 (1927), 55-82, rpt. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1970. The study of F. J. Mason, The Melodrama in France: From the Revolution to the Beginning of Romantic Drama, 1791-1830 (Baltimore: Furst, 1912) has been superseded by more current works.

[19] Brooks, p. 90.

[20] On Pixérécourt, see, among others, Willie C. Hartog, Guilbert de Pixérécourt: sa vie, con mélodrame, sa technique et son influence (Paris: Chamion, 1913); Alexander Lacey, Pixérécourt and the French Romantic Drama (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1928); André Billan, 'Mélodrame et littérature: le cas de Pixérécourt,' Revue des sciences humaines, no. 162 (1876), 231-45, and Edmond Estève, 'Le Père du mélodrame: Rene-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt,' in Études de littérature préromantique, Bibliothèque de la Revue comparée (Paris: Champion, 1923), pp. 139-68.

[21] The Essai sur le mélodrame serves as a preface to the Veuve Dabo's Chefs-d'oeuvre du répertoire de mélodrame (Paris: Chez Mme Veuve Dabo, 1825) I, pp. i-xix. To this point, I have not yet determined if and when this essay was originally printed. References within the text will be based on this edition.

[22] *Théâtre de René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt* (sic), (Paris: Barba, 1813 ) I, p. 3. Further references to Pixérécourt's dramas will be based on this edition.

[23] Maxine de Rougement, 'L'esthétique théâtrale de Benjamin Constant,' in *Benjamin Constant, Madame de Staël et le Groupe de Coppet*. Actes du deuxième congrès de Lausanne . . . et du troisième de Coppet (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation; Lausanne: Inst. Benjamin Constant, 1982), p. 250.

[24] Benjamin Constant, *Reflexions sur la tragédie*. *À l'occasion d'une tragédie allemande de M. Robert, intitulée 'Du Pouvoir des Préjugés*,' in his *Oeuvres*, ed. Alfred Roulin, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 123 (Paris: Gallimard, 1957 , p. 943. Future references to this edition will be abbreviated in the text as (O, p. __).

[25] Constant, *Wallstein*. Tragédie en cinq actes et en vers, éd. critique publiée avec de nombreuse variantes et des documents inédits par Jean-René Derré, Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres de Lyon (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1965), p. 180 (V, x). Further references to this edition will be indicated by (W, p. __).

[26] Danielle Johnson-Cousin, 'Les idées dramatiques du Groupe de Coppet,' in *Le Groupe Coppet*, Actes et documents du deuxième Colloque de Coppet, 10-13 juillet 1974; ed. S. Balayé et Jean-Daniel Dandaux (Genève: Slatkine, 1977; Paris: Champion, 1977), p. 239.

[27] Johnson-Cousin, p. 256.

[28] Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne* (Part One) in her *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1820), X, p. 351. Future references from de Staël will be based on the volumes and page numbers of this edition.

[29] M. H. Jones, *Le Théâtre national en France de 1800 à 1930* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1975), p. 56.

[30] See A. W. Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, ed. V. Amoretti (Berlin: Amelang & Schneider, 1939), II, p. 105.

[31] Lemercier, 'Avant-propos,' *Richelieu, ou la journée des dupes* (Paris: Dupon, 1928), p. ii, cited by Jones, p. 57.

[32] *Chefs-d'oeuvres tragiques* II, V, iv , p. 493. Further references are based on this text.

[33] *Le Maire du Palais* in *Oeuvres complètes de M. Ancelot*, ed. X. B. Saintine (Paris: Delahays, 1855), V, ii, p. 59. Further references are from this edition.

[34] Stendhal, *Racine et Shakespeare*, ed. Pierre Martino (Paris: Champion, 1925), I, p. 3.

[35] See Gerd Thieltges, *Bürgerlicher Klassizismus und romantisches Theater. Untersuchungen zu den frühen Dramen Prosper Mérimées, (1803-1870)*, Kölner Romantistische Arbeiten, N.F. 44 (Genève: Droz, 1975), pp. 344-51. See also Muret, II, p. 232.

[36] Prosper Mérimée, *Théâtre de Clara Gazul, comédienne espagnole, suivi de la Jaqerie et da la Famille Carvajal*, Nouvelle Édition (Paris: Calmann-Levy, n.e. ), p. 72.

[37] Thieltges, p. 379.

[38] Mérimée, *La Jaquerie*, préface d'Aragon (Paris: La Bibliothèque Française, 1946), p. 35.

[39] Maurice Descotes, *Le Drame romantique et ses grands créateurs. (1827-1839)* (Paris: Publications Universitaires de France, 1955), p. 39.

[40] Délacluse, *Journal* 26 Septembre 1827, p. 459, cited by Descotes, p. 39.

[41] Muret, *L'Histoire par le théâtre 1789-1851*, II: *Le Restauration*, p. 200.

[42] See Descotes, p. 41.

[43] See Albert Le Roy, *L'Aube du théâtre romantique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Societé d'Éditions Littéraires et Artistiques, 1904), pp. 90.

[44] Le Roy, p. 98.

[45] Arnault, *Germanicus*, perf. 1817 (censored); replayed 1824; cited by Le Roy, p. 101.

[46] Descotes, pp. 54-5 (citing from the *Nouvelle année litteraire*, 15 mars 1828.

[47] *Courrier des Théâtres*, 19 Septembre 1827, cited by Descotes, p. 54.

[48] Victor Hugo, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. chronologique, dir. Jean Massin (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1967) III, p. 653. Future quotations from Hugo's works will refer to this edition by volume and page.

[49] Alexandre Dumas, *Mes Mémoires*, nouvelle édition (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1865-70), p. 30. Further references in the text will be indicated (M, vol., p. __).

[50] Tafari, *Folie romantico-classico-comico et diabolique*, cited in Alexandre Dumas, *Théâtre complet*, ed. Fernande Bassan, Bibliothèque Introuvable, 9, (Paris: Minard [Lettres Modernes] I, p. 547. Further references in the text, indicated (TC, Vol. No., p. __).

[51] Casimir Delavigne, Marino Falièro (Geneve: Lador, 1829), p. 3. (Bound togehter in volume entitled Receuil de comédies on spine, containing Dumas' Henri III et sa cour, Ancelot's Un Divorce (1831), Picard et Mazères, Les Trois quartiers (1827), all published by the same firm; no title page; no table of contents. Further references based on this text.

[52] Le Roy, p. 259.

[53] 'Avertissement' to Ducis' Hamlet, cited by Le Roy, p. 284.

[54] Ducis, Hamlet in Chefs-d'oeuvres tragiques,II, p. 54.

[55] See, among others, the vivid account of Linda Kelly, The Young Romantics (New York: Random, 1976), p. 40, on the 'handkerchief' controversy.

[56] Alfred de Vigny, 'Lettre à Lord ______, sur la soirée du 24 octobre 1829 et sur un système dramatique,' in his Oeuvres complètes, ed. F. Baldensperger, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 74 (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), I, p. 332.

[57] Le Courrier des théâtres, 27 et 28 février 1830; Gil Blas 28 fevrier 1830, cited by Marie-Antoinette Allevy, La Mise en scène en France dans la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle (Paris: Droz, 1938), p. 96.

[58] A. Lacey, Pixérécourt and the French Romantic Drama (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1928), p. 58.

[59] Peter Conrad, Romantic Opera and Literary Form (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977), p. 26.

[60] Conrad, p. 27.

[61] Conrad, p. 4.

[62] Anne Ubersfeld, Le Roi et le bouffon; Étude sur le théâtre de Hugo de 1830 a 1839 (Paris: Corti, 1974), p. 204.

[63] Le Courrier des Théâtres (30 avril 1835 [?]) cited by Annie Ubersfeld, p. 278. No precise reference to the date of the article by Charles Maurice is given here; the source having been inaccessible for our present purposes, cross-reference to the review citations of Descotes (p. 292) has led to the suggested date.

[64] L'Artiste, 9 (1835), 203, cited by Ubersfeld, p. 278; also La Chronique de Paris (3 mai 1835), cited by Ubersfeld, p. 278.

[65] Théophile Gautier, Histoire de l'art dramatique en France, Deuxieme série, p. 318.

[66] *Courrier français*, 10 nov. 1838, cited by Ubersfeld, p. 343.

[67] *Revue française*, nov. 1838, cited by Ubersfeld, p. 343.

[68] Ubersfeld, p. 345, with supporting references to Planché, Janin, *La Gazette de France*, *Le Monde dramatique*, *La Revue de Paris*, *Le Courrier français*.

[69] Jules Janin, *Débats*, 12 nov. 1838, cited by Ubersfeld, p. 346.

[70] Ubersfeld, p. 347.

[71] F. L. Lucas, *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1948), p. 54.

[72] Henri Peyre, *Literature and Sincerity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 111-139.

[73] See Ubersfeld, pp. 317-8; also pp. 475-508.

[74] Samia Chahine, *La Dramaturgie de Victor Hugo (1816-1843)* (Paris: Nizet, 1971), p. 89.

[75] Maurice Souriau, *De la convention dans la tragédie classique et dans le drame romantique* (Paris, 1885; rpt. Genève: Slatkine, 1970), p. 187; 177.

[76] Rainer Warning, 'Hugo. *Ruy Blas*,' in *Das Französische Theater. Vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Jürgen von Stackelberg (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1968), p. 148-9.

[77] Warning, p. 153.

[78] Ubersfled, p. 318.

[79] See Fernande Bassan and Silvie Chevalley, *Alexandre Dumas père et la Comédie-Française*, p. 58.

[80] Gautier, *Notices Romantiques*, printed alongside his *L'Histoire du romantisme*, p. 167.

[81] Gautier, p. 169; 171.

[82] Descotes, p. 151.

[83] Since Bassan's edition of Dumas' dramas is still incomplete, references to all dramatic works succeeding *Antony* are from the *Théâtre complet d'Alexandre Dumas*, nouvelle édition revue et corrigée par l'auteur (Paris: Gosselin, 1843), 6 vols., abbreviated (TC vol. , p. __) in the text. The reference to *Andromaque* is TCI, p. 383.

[84] Descotes, p. 228.

[85] Legouvé, *Soixante ans de souvenirs* (Paris: Hetzel, 1886-7) II, p. 32; cited by Descotes, p. 230.

[86] *L'Artiste* (1831), II, p. 212, cited by Descotes, p. 230.

[87] Nebout, *Le Drame romantique*, p. 294. The study of Bassan and Chevalley, *Alexandre Dumas, père et la Comédie-Francaise*, only mentions *La Tour de Nesle* in passing (p. 133).

[88] Ancelot, *Un Divorce, Drame en un acte, mélé de chant* (Paris: Barba, 1831), xviii, p. 35 (bound toether with Dumas, *Henri III et sa cour* and other dramas; no title page; *Receuil de comédies* on spine of volume.

[89] *La Pie Voleuse* (Paris: Barba, 1815), III, xxiv , p. 64; bound in the collection *Comédies diverses*, I, no title page.

[90] Mm. ***, *Le Vampire, Mélodrame en trois actes avec un prologue* (Paris: Barba, 1820), III, ix , p. 56. Bound with other dramas in *Pièces de Théâtre* V, no title page. The drama seems to be a translation of the English play of the same title. Reference to Escoffier's bibliography, *Le Mouvement romantique (1778-1850), Essai de Bibliographie synchronique et methodique* (Paris: Maison du Bibliophile, 1934), has not confirmed authorship. The same year, however, C. Nodier and Cyprian Berard's *Lord Ruthwen, ou les Vampires*, a novel, was printed in two volumes by Ladvocat (Paris). See Escoffier, p. 98 [347].

[91] Descotes, p. 180.

[92] *L'Europe littéraire*, 3 mai 1833, cited by Descotes, p. 180.

[93] *Robert Macaire* in *La France dramatique au dix-neuvième siècle. Choix de pièces modernes* (Paris: Barba, Pollet, Bézou et al., 1841) XII, p. 302.

[94] See Neil Core Arvin, *Eugene Scribe and the French Theatre, 1815-1860* (1924; rpt. New York: Blom, 1967), pp. 3-31 for an overview of his dramatic production. In spite of its age, Arvin's book remains a readable and thorough survey of the content of Scribe's best-known works.

[95] *Oeuvres choisies de E. Scribe* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1845), III 'Après,' xii , p. 247. Further references will be to the volumes in this edition.

[96] Arvin, p. 38.

[97] Gautier, *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France*, I, p. 84.

[98] Gautier, *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France*, I, p. 84.

[99] Gautier, *Histoire de l'art dramatique*, I, p. 36.

[100] Arvin, pp. 21-2.

[101] Gautier, *Histoire de l'art dramatique*, I, p. 118.

[102] Gautier, I, p. 85.

[103] *Le Corsaire*, le 3 décembre 1830, in Henry Lyonnet, *Les "Premières" de Alfred de Musset* (Paris: Delagrave, 1927), p. 11.

[104] Remark to a friend, cited by Lyonnet, p. 12.

[105] See Emma Sakellaridès, *Alfred de Vigny, auteur dramatique* (Paris: Ed. de la Plume, 1902), pp. 114-5. Sakellaridès refers to the drama as a 'proverbe' although no such generic designation is given by Vigny.

[106] *Les Débats* (n.p., n.d.) cited by Sakellarides, p. 115.

[107] *Le National*, in Sakellarides,pp. 99. No date is given.

[108] Sakellaridès, p. 99.

[109] Gautier, *Notices Romantiques*, published with *L'Histoire du romantisme*, p. 153.

[110] Descotes, p. 281.

[111] The parody *Angelo, tyran pas doux* (Dupeuty and Duvert) makes mention of how 'l'art dégringole' in a reference to Dorval's staircase. The 'acrobatic' allusion is from *Le Courrier des Théâtres* (18 fev 1835). This review goes on to remark upon the parallels with the ending of *Antony*. See Descotes, p. 282.

[112] Gautier, 'Reprise de *Chatterton*' in *Notices romantiques*, p. 160.

[113] Gautier, 'Reprise,' p. 161.

[114] Musset has, in effect, 'stolen the stage' of the French romantic drama. An older study still highly useful is that of Léon Lafoscade, *Le Théâtre d'Alfred de Musset* (Paris, 1901; rpt. Nizet, 1966). Since 1965 the number of works devoted to Musset's dramas has proliferated. Among more recent studies, the following may be singled out: C. Affron, *A Stage for Poets: Studies in the Theatre of Hugo and Musset*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971); David Baguley, 'Le Mythe de Glaucos. L'expression figurée dans *Lorenzaccio* de Musset,' *Europe* 583-84 (1977) 69-82; Joyce Bromfield, *De Lorenzino de Medicis à Loranzaccio. Étude d'un thème historique*, Études de littérature étrangère et comparée, 64 (Paris: Didier, 1972); A. Callen, 'The Place of *Lorenzaccio* in Musset's Theatre,' *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 5 (1969) 225-31; Michel Couzet, 'Jeu et serieux dans le théâtre de Musset,' *Journées d'études sur Alfred de Musset*, Société des Études Romantiques (Clermont-Ferrand: Études Romantiques, 1978); H. S. Gochberg, *Stage of Dreams: The Dramatic Art of Alfred de Museet, 1828-1834*

(Genève: Droz, 1967); Simon Jeune, 'Lorenzaccio, drame romantique?' in Journées d'Études sur Alfred de Musset, pp. 108-25; Andre Lebois, Vues sur le théâtre de Musset, (Paris: Aubanel, 1966); J. Lowin, 'The Frames of Lorenzaccio,' French Review 53 (1979) 190-98; Bernard Masson, Musset et le theatre intérieur. Nouvelles recherches sur Lorenzaccio (Paris: A. Colin, 1974); Walter Moser, 'Lorenzaccio. Le Carnaval et le Cardinal,' Romantisme 8, xix (1978) 94-108; Pierre Odoul, Le Drame intime de Musset. Étude psychoanalytique de l'oeuvre et de la vie d'Alfred de Musset (Paris: Pensée Universelle, 1976); Eric Gans, Musset et le 'Drame tragique': Essai d'analyse paradoxale (Paris: Corti, 1974).

[115] Paul de Musset, Alfred de Musset, sa vie et son oeuvre, 2nd ed. (Paris: Charpentier, 1879), p. 99.

[116] Lafoscade, p. 3.

[117] See Lafoscade, pp. 203; also Gochberg, p. 71.

[118] Alfred de Musset, Théâtre complet, ed. Maurice Allem, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 17 (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 389. Further citations from Musset's dramas will refer to this text.

[119] See Gochberg, pp. 70-9; Lafoscade, p. 5; Affron, p. 118.

[120] Gans, p. 92.

[121] For a delightful instance of melodramatic burlesque, see the anonymous Les Frères féroces ou M. Bonardin à la répétition, mélodrame en un acte, à spectacle, perf. Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin, Sept. 21, 1812 (Paris: Fages, 1819), pp. 28. The typological parallels with the 'theatre within the theatre' of Tieck's fantastic comedies are striking.

[122] Gochberg, p. 34.

[123] Musset, Poésies complètes, ed. Maurice Allem, Biblio. de la Pleiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 59.

[124] Gochberg, p. 37.

[125] On the English 'influences,' see Lafoscade, pp. 58-69.

[126] On the re-evaluation of youth and the devaluation of age in Romanticism, see Maria Piwinska, 'Le Vieillard désespéré et l'histoire,' Romantisme 35, xii (1982) 3-14.

[127] Lafoscade, p. 23.

[128] Where the text of 1851, given in the Théâtre complet, differs from the original, reference will be made to the version of 1833 to 1848, reproduced in the 'Variantes' accompanying Allem's edition.

[129] A. de Musset, Oeuvres complètes en prose, ed. Maurice Allem, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 49 (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 940.

[130] René Bourgeois, *L'Ironie romantique. Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à Gérard de Nerval* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1977), p. 247.

[131] My thanks are here due to Dr. E. D. Blodgett (Univ. Alberta) who, upon being shown the schemata of Tieck's *Genoveva*, Vigny's *La Maréchale d'Ancre* and Musset's *Lorenzaccio*, noted that similar structures for multi-circular layering have been observed in Latin verse. The correspondence appears to be typological.

[132] Lafoscade, pp. 226, 227.

[133] For a useful summary of the characteristics and historical development of the 'proverbe,' see Maurice Martin's edition of Musset's *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* and *Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*, Les Petits Classiques Bordas, dir. Fernan Angué (Paris: Borda, 1965), pp. 5-6.

[135] See Volker Klotz, *Goschlossene und offene Form im Drama* (München: Hanser, 1960, rpt. 1969); also Manfred Pfister, *Das Drama. Methode und Analyse* (München: DtV, 1977).

[135] See Lafoscade, pp. 293-4; also Jean Pommier, *Variétés sur Alfred de Musset et son théâtre* (Paris: Nizet, n.d.), pp. 74-101.

[136] Howarth, p. 313.

[137] Maurice Souriau, *La Décadence du romantisme*, Vol. II of his *L'Histoire du romantisme en France* (Paris: Spec, 1927), p. 220.

[138] Gautier, *Le Moniteur*, 11 juin 1858.

[139] A. Dubruck, *Gérard de Nerval and the German Heritage* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), p. 83.

[140] Goethe, *Faust et le second Faust*, trans. Gérard de Nerval, ed. Maurice Allemand, intro. Henri Clouard (Paris: Garnier, 1964), p. 186.

[141] See Gérard de Nerval, *Théâtre*, vol. III of his *Oeuvres complémentaires*, ed. Jean Richer, Nouvelle Bibliothèque Nervallienne (Paris: Minard, 1967), p. ix.

[142] *Le Monde Dramatique*, 1839, pp. 253-4; rpt. in *Nerval*, *Théâtre* IV, p. 427.

[143] Howarth, p. 336.

[144] Gautier, *Histoire du théâtre*, II, p. 225.

[145] Gautier, *Théâtre: Mystère, comédies et ballets*, ed. M.--- D.--- Nouvelle éd. (Paris: Charpentier, 1905), p. 46, xv. For a penetrating commentary on this work, see Claude Book-Senninger, *Théophile Gautier: Auteur dramatique* (Paris: Nizet, 1972), pp. 49-100.

[146] See Book-Senninger, pp. 242-3. La Juive de Constantine has unfortunately not been available for the purposes of this study. Few copies are extant, and there is no reprinting to date.

[147] Howarth, p. 353.

[148] Gautier, Histoire du théâtre, III, p. 51.

[149] Gautier, Histoire du théâtre, II, p. 237.

[150] Balzac, Mercadet in J. L. Borgerhoff, ed., Nineteenth Century French Plays, Century Modern Language Series (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1931, rpt. 1959), p. 373. This anthology has been used for dramas of secondary importance to our study, since it assembles in convenient form, with fairly extensive editorial annotations, the prominent works of the period.

[151] Howarth, p. 363.

[152] R. B. Clark, ed., La Dame aux camélias (London: Oxford, 1972), p. 44.

[153] Alexandre Dumas fils, La Dame aux camélias in Borgerhoff, p. 415.

[154] Alphonse de Lamartine, Oeuvres poétiques, ed. M.-F. Guyard (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 1401 (V, vii).

[155] I should add at this point my indebtedness to Prof. W. D. Howarth (Univ. of Bristol) for his generous sacrifice of time on a busy day (March, 1982) to discuss various aspects of this chapter with me. As well, my supervisor, Prof. M. V. Dimić, has as always contributed invaluable suggestions. To him I am indebted in particular for having observed the 'Perdican--perdu' verbal echo.

## CHAPTER TEN

## Conclusion

### 1. Beyond Romanticism

To this point in the course of our study, we have concentrated on building, more or less stone by stone, a historical and text-centered typology of dramatic closure in the German, English and French romantic drama. Wherever possible and relevant, we have also moved from drama to theatre, to reveal a central aspect of the romantic ending, its ability to evoke--or even to demand--imaginative 're-creation' or 'co-creation' on the part of the actor and the receiver. In this respect, the dramatic genre is especially versatile, moving as it does from the text to a preliminary set of receivers, who in turn become transmitters, to the spectator, simultaneously a receiver and a constituent link in the process of interpretation or re-creation. The so-called 'still-born' drama which represents one of the prominent phenomena of the Romantics is also not a mere substitute for the imaginative prose narrative, such as the novel, novella, or short story, or the verse epic. On the mental stage of the reading drama, the very shape of the text, its division into dialogue, the verbal evocation of setting, and its derivation from a genre created for theatrical performance invite a 'suspension of disbelief.' The reader's willingness to mentally 'stage' the work, to supplement the text by means of an imaginative representation of intonation, action, and gesture, transforms him into a silent 'actor' who becomes, paradoxically, his own receiver.

Literary and theatrical innovation can only, however, be identified against the background of tradition. For this reason, our study has involved three preliminary stages: the arrival at a concept of the 'ending' within the larger system of the drama, a method of identifying the ending as a structural component of dramatic form, and an overview of developments in dramatic closure preceding the Romantic Era. A survey of the criticism and theory of major romantic writers has led to a set of preliminary hypotheses concerning the romantic 'sense of the ending' which, in its abstract articulations, borders upon a sense of the non-ending.

The dramatic theory of the Romantics emphasizes several aspects: motion, change, the suggestive and evocative power of verbal 'pictures,' the sense that the work of art is merely a part or fragment of an infinite totality, the upward movement toward an ever-expanding intuitive vision on the part of the creator and the receiver, and the presence of antitheses, parallels, and contrasts. These touchstones of theory are integral to the closural structures which have, in this study, emerged from textual examination.

In our endeavour to include a truly representative number of predominantly 'serious' romantic dramas, and to compare and contrast romantic forms and content with those of contemporary non-romantic works, we have, it is hoped, arrived at a convincing demonstration of what is, in our view, a major development in the history of drama and culture at large. Potentially, this typology could serve as one of the core identifying features of the romantic drama, indicating as it does a pivotal redirection of theory, structure, and function.

Not only has the romantic ending frequently posed unresolved questions to the receiver, but also, questioning has lain at the basis or our enquiry. We have aimed throughout the study at maintaining a certain scepticism toward romantic and post-romantic theory and criticism. In a movement subject to chameleon-like transformation, to polemical pronouncements, to impulsive statements, and to frequent contradiction between theory and practice, a questioning attitude on the part of the literary researcher, critic and historian can serve as a corrective measure. A danger consists, we have frequently suggested, in the tendency to accept at face value the ideal vision formulated by the Romantics of what _should_ be accomplished in the represented world of the text, and to equate the romantic sense of the ending with idealism and transcendence. Too much has been made of the romantic ideal of fusion into an all-embracing totality, of the imaginative flight from reality into an exotic world of the faraway, the past or the future. The prophetic vision that dominates the ending of Byron's _Marino Faliero_ and _Cain_, or more indirectly, of Musset's _Lorenzaccio_ is indeed far from Utopian. An impulse may indeed exist, as in Hölderlin's _Empedokles_ or Shelley's _Prometheus Unbound_, to construct a world of infinite totality and progress; the accomplishment of such a vision, as our analyses have aimed at pointing out, is yet fraught with contradictions and obstacles contained within the individual, in the human condition, and in the forces of history. An awareness of irony is all-pervasive among the Romantics, whether or not it takes on the swivelling motions of the fluctuation between 'Scherz und Ernst' characteristic of the Schlegelian concept of romantic irony.

In this ability of the Romantics to recognize the co-existence of antitheses, to realize the difference between desire and fulfillment, and in their propensity to approach problems, character, society, and history from many different perspectives, the drama of the nineteenth century takes a major step toward a theatre that does not demonstrate or lecture, that does not present a carefully filtered vision of human existence. While Racin's Phèdre is a carefully-drawn psychological study of the corrosive effects of misdirected passion on a central character, Kleist's Die Familie Schroffenstein and Robert Guiskard, Byron's Marino Faliero and Cain, Hugo's Marion de Lorme and Ruy Blas, and Musset's Lorenzaccio go beyond the exceptional individual to probe, however successfully this may be accomplished, the very tenets of inter-human relationship, and launch oblique attacks on the socio-political systems which hamper personal freedom of thought and action, and threaten one's dignity as a human being. Significantly, however, while the drama directs a series of spotlight-collages on the situations of the conflict, it seldom provides answers or solutions for the individual, communal and existential problems it poses. The idea of facile solutions disappears, in fact, in the endings of dramas such as Shelley's The Cenci, Musset's On ne badine pas avec l'amour and Lorenzaccio, and Büchner's Woyzeck and Dantons Tod. Ethical distinctions, these dramas imply, can hardly be drawn in a universe where the roots and manifestations of of good and evil are virtually indistinguishable, and where the very act of seeing in order to differentiate reality from illusion leaves us, paradoxically, even more open to the illusions of our senses and our rational minds. Idealism is thus a component of the romantic drama, but certainly not an end product. If the content of romantic closure has any didactic or pedagogical function, it is that of awakening the receiver's awareness and of prodding him to search for the roots of individual and social problems, seeking to eliminate the effects by modifying the causes.

Our study of the structures and functions of romantic closure has concerned itself as little as possible with matters of aesthetic valuation. Our aim has consisted in determining what is said, shown and suggested, and the structural means whereby the drama renders its content. This has led us back into the whole of the text and, in certain instances, to its representation and reception. Just as the commentary of the traditional ending, banal as it may often seem, outweighs its length in importance by articulating a vision of an unshattered and reinstated order, so the romantic drama presents an ethos in its ending. At the same time, the poetics of closure, derived from the structure and functions of the ending, throw light upon the poetics of the romantic drama.

Before our concluding assessment can, however, proceed to summarize the unity in multeity which emerges from a comparative view of the romantic sense of the 'non-ending,' the historical framework, already completed for dramatic closure preceding the Romantic Movement, must be extended to the other side. The future fate of the romantic drama, and of its daringly unconventional closural practice, may be summarized briefly in the clash of literary tradition and innovation which succeeds the early nineteenth century: critics and proponents of new tendencies are over-eager to generalize, judge, and condemn, but too reluctant to read.

One confirmation that the frequently exotic wrapping of the romantic drama tends to conceal its philosophical complexities lies in the distinction proposed by Becker in his Documents of Modern Literary Realism. He refers to the 'sharply different philosophical positions held by the two schools' of Romanticism and Realism:

> Romanticism must ultimately be found to rest on an idealist metaphysics and its view of art to be one that is consonant with that metaphysical position . . . . Realism really did constitute a fresh start because it was based on a new set of assumptions about the universe. It denied that there was a reality of essences or forms which was not accessible to ordinary sense perception, insisting that reality be viewed as something immediately at hand, common to ordinary human experience, and open to observation.[1]

The means employed by the two movements, it is true, are diametrically opposed. In place of intuition, the propelling and evocative power of the symbol, and the focus on intangible dream-worlds, Realism focuses on the tangible and the corporeal. 'We demand not the ideal of life, but life as it is.'[2] This slogan bases itself on the supposed contradiction between Romanticism and Realism. Life has been pruned: in place of the awareness that 'reality' takes on Protean shapes and forms, and that mere seeing is not the key to absolute truth, the new literature now views 'truth' as the end-product of objective perception. Paradoxically, the belief that 'truth' can be objectively apprehended and faithfully reproduced in art constitutes in itself an ideal.

The search for the 'copied from nature' instead of the 'created' in artistic representation leads the Realist to the matter of closure. Chernišsevskij's Life and Aesthetics (1853), for instance, implies that art should follow the natural occurrences of daily life in its search for an appropriate 'ending.' Chernisevskij asks whether 'the development and denouement' (sic) of events in real life are artistically full and complete. His response is in two parts: he first argues that in the presently-accepted view of art, 'truth' does not suffice. The search for 'embellishments, outward brilliance, intricacy' now favoured by art is actually instigated by a demand for artifice. The answer lies in a redirection of the aims and content of art.[3]

One of the 'artifices' which, according to Chernišsevskij, have been imposed on tragic closure is that of 'fate or necessity.'

> The necessity in which art clothes tragedy is a consequence of the usual principle governing works of art--that "the denouement must flow from the plot," or the irrelevant subjection of the poet to the conceptions of fate.[4]

His judgement of the ending is essentially a criticism of the Aristotelian-based set of conventions preceding Romanticism. Linear progression, as our overview of closure among the German, English and French Romantics has revealed, is frequently not central to the dramatic action, and the ending may consist in a whimsical twist of intrigue, a collage-progression of scenes, a mute pose expressing unreconciled tensions, a circular return to a self-perpetuating cycle of disaster, or an ironically-posed set of contradictions; most often, the romantic drama hurtles to a conclusion, making a cry of protest or anguish its final articulation. In speaking of 'completion,' however, Chernišsevskij is not expressly denying that life offers a 'dénouement;' rather, he argues that the structures of completion are present in the materials derived from 'reality.' In one sense, therefore, literary theory has moved back several steps, to enclose the drama once more into a self-contained unity of beginning, middle and end.

Just as Cherniševskij seizes upon 'idealism' as the opponent of the version of 'realism' he is propounding, so Émile Zola's *Le Naturalisme au théâtre* (1882) raises the flag of Naturalism over the corpse of Romanticism. Admittedly, Zola states, the Romantic Movement accomplished the death of the old tragic forms. He dismisses it finally, however, as 'une simple guerre de costumes et de rhétoriques, rien de plus.'[5]

Concurrently, Zola admits that the romantic theatre was a necessary step in the progression toward a naturalist stage: 'Son amour de l'action, son mélange du rire et des larmes, sa recherche du costume et du décor exacts, indiquent le mouvement vers la vie réelle' (XXIX, p. 15). The closural innovations of the Romantics do not, however, merit consideration. Rather, he refers to 'l'action outrée, sautant aux quatre coins de la scène, frappant à droite et à gauche, ne raisonnant et n'analysant plus, étalant sous les yeux du public l'horreur sanglante des dénouements' (XXIX, p. 13). His view of the romantic drama is thus limited to the cape and sword escapades closely allied with the melodrama. Focusing on the action incorporated in a limited number of romantic endings, he does not probe the underlying ethos.

When, however, in *Nos auteurs dramatiques* (1880) he turns to the problems of dramatic form and closural structure, he theoretical proximity to romantic theory and practice is pronounced. He condemns, for instance, the tendency of dramatists such as Augier and Dumas fils to transform the plot into a mechanism, perfectly aligned to arrived at the intended outcome (XXX, p. 20). Strangely enough, he criticism of the ending of Ruy Blas takes on classicist overtones. The final scene of Hugo's drama fails, he implies, because it is not 'necessary' to the preceding developments:

> Alors, à quoi bon du poison? Tous les autres dénouements sont logiques et probables, excepté celui-là . . . . La formule veut que Ruy Blas s'empoisonne, pour la beauté de l'idée. Il a vécu comme un enfant, il meurt en imbécile (XXX, p. 50).

His objection to romantic closure--which he bases only on the example of Hugo--thus hinges on two factors: its infringement of the laws of necessity, and its irrationalism. Instead of the 'fantaisies mystiques' of Romanticism, he dictates, the drama and its ending should incorporate 'des documents vrais, ayant la vie logique de leurs organes tels que les donnent l'analyse et l'expérience' (XXX, p. 221).

One ending discussed in Nos auteurs dramatiques finally wins Zola's praise, and here his concept of what should constitute and ending is clarified. Singling out La Cigale by Meilhac and Halévy for approbation, he notes the drama's freedom from traditional strictures of form:

> Comme on le voit, MM. Meilhac et Halévy continuent à s'affranchir du code dramatique, en se moquent parfaitement de toute intrigue suivie et équilibrée. Nous voilà loin des pièces bien faites de Scribe. Les auteurs pré sentent simplement au publique une série de tableaux, reliés entre eux par un fil très mince, et quie casse même parfois. Ils n'ont au fond qu'un souci: traiter séparément chaque tableau avec le plus d'esprit et le plus de gaîté

> possible, y promener des types pris sur nature, relevés d'une pointe de fantaisie parisienne. Quant aux péripéties, elles arriveront tant bien que mal, elles n'arriveront même pas du tout; et quant au dénouement, il sera n'importe lequel. L'intérêt n'est plus dans le mécanisme ingénieux des divers éléments de la comédie; il est dans la vivacité, dans les peintures fines et vivante de tableaux traités isolément . . . . J'insiste, parce qu'il y a là une nouvelle application, heureuse et applaudie, des idées que je défends. Une fois de plus, il est éprouvé que le sujet n'importe pas, que l'intrigue peut manquer, que les personnages n'ont pas même besoin d'avoir un lien quelconque avec l'action; il suffit que les tableaux offerts au public soient vivants et qu'ils le fassent rire our pleurer (XXX, p. 61).

The above 'manifesto of closure' illustrates to perfection the patterns of recurrence in literary theory and practice. Under the guise of a new movement, aiming at a search for objective reality aided by the scientific method and the precepts of later nineteenth-century philosophy and psychology, Zola formulates, in effect, a concept of the ending which, either by chance or by direct influence, derives first from Sentimentalist theory and then from Romanticism. The concept of the tableau vivant is, of course, a derivative from Diderot's Entretiens and Mercier's Tableau de Paris (1788). That the 'moving picture' should, however, form a fragmentary subsection of a larger system, and that this series of pictures should converge in a kaleidoscopic 'collage,' rather than in a linear formation which directs them toward a preconceived goal is an essential element of romantic theory and practice. To return to A.W. Schlegel's metaphor for the romantic drama, Zola's dramatic concept has more affinity with the massive painting than with the sharply-defined contours of the classicist 'sculpture.'

The difference between Zola and the Romantics lies more on the level of content than of structure. What Zola has in essence rejected is the dualism of Romanticism, which implies the co-existence of spirit and matter. The butt of his attack on Hugo's 'galimatias poétique' (XXX, p. 61) in 'La Préface de Cromwell,' which he interprets at face value, is the equation of the 'sublime' with spirit, and the 'grotesque' with body (XXX, p. 62).

Justly or not, Zola's rejection of the subject-matter of the Romantics yet masks rather thinly a typological endorsement of their closural structures. Whether this stems from direct influence, conscious or not, or from survivals of the episodic drama, first developed by the Romantics, on the stage of the later nineteenth century, the significance of the affinity is not undone. When, moreover, we consider the outcome of Thérèse Raquin (1873) where, in an access of guilt and fear, Thérèse and Laurent fall dead from poisoning at the feet of Madame Raquin, the curtain line bears us back to the 1830's: 'Ils sont morts bien vite!' says the once-paralyzed old woman, suddenly restored to speech. In the grotesque figure of this character, oddly reminiscent of the 'monsters' Zola despises in the theatre of Hugo we see the incorporation of gloating vengeance. What distinguishes this outcome from romantic practice is its unequivocal rendering of the punishment that inevitably, Zola implies, ensues from crime. The moral 'message,' while not stated, is yet implied (V, p. 130).

That Zola, with his antagonism toward Romanticism engendered possibly by a secret attraction toward its rhetoric and symbolism, should formulate his thoughts on closure without recognising their roots is not surprising. More remarkable is the persistent tendency of modern criticism to deny the radical nature of the dramatic theory and practice which makes of the romantic drama a forerunner of modern drama. When we refer, for instance, to Manfred Pfister's highly useful and thorough study of dramatic forms and structures, the sense of a 'blind spot' obscuring the early nineteenth century is evident. Following Volker Klotz's distinction between 'open' and 'closed' dramatic form, with its corresponding distinction between 'open' and 'closed' endings, Pfister states:

> Als Gegenentwurf zum geschlossenen Dramenende hat sich gerade *im modernen drama* das offene Dramenende entwickelt. Diese Abweichung vom klassischen Schema, der Verzicht auf einen Dramenschluß, in dem die Informationsdiskrepanzen aufgehoben und die Konflikte gelöst werden, kann dabei unterschiedliche Funktionen haben.[6] (my italics)

He goes on to refer to first Beckett, then Brecht and Stoppard as examples of practicioners of the 'open' ending. His farthest step 'backward' is to Gerhart Hauptmann: 'Eine vergleichbare Kritik der Konvention des geschlossenen Dramenende findet sich im Rahmen einer naturalistischen Dramentheorie *schon* bei Gerhart Hauptmann'[7] (my emphasis). Ignoring Hauptmann's tendency, in dramas such as *Vor Sonnenaufgang* and *Die Weber*, to end with a dynamic motif, devoid of sequel, while unresolved conflicts continue in the represented world of the drama, Pfister maintains that the German dramatist's statements are limited to extra-textual reflection, and neither thematised nor concretized in his dramas.

A central passage on the 'endless' drama occurs in Chapiro's *Gespräche mit G. Hauptmann*:

> Das wahre Drama ist seiner Natur nach endlos. Es ist ein fortdauernder innerer Kampf ohne Entscheidung. In dem Augenblick da dies fällt, bricht das Drama ab. Da wir aber jedem Bühnenwerk eine Entscheidung zu geben gezwungen sind, hat jedes gespielte Drama im Grunde etwas Pedantisches, Konventionelles an sich, was das Leben nicht hat . . . . Das ideelle Drama, daß ich schreiben möchte, wäre eines, daß keine Lösung und keinen Abschluß hätte.[8]

The brief essay, 'Das Problem des Dramatischen' (August 1912) is a variation on the above themes. Defending himself against charges of having produced 'incomplete' plays out of ineptitude, Haupmann again emphasizes that the convention of the complete drama is a distortion of aesthetics: 'Das Fertigmachen ist selten künstlerisch.'[9] The modern dramatist may either follow the example of the Ancients, who neatly conclude the tragedy with death, or of Shakespeare, whose ending 'ist ein Strom, der ins Meer mündet.' He summarizes: 'Die waagrechte Komposition duldet kein Fertigmachen.'[10]

It is amusing to visualize a multi-vocal reply from the Romantics to such a series of assertions, based on excerpts from our overview of their statements on closure (Chapter VI). Jean Paul could begin by stating, 'Im Drama ist eine herrschende Leidenschaft; diese muß steigen, fallen, fliehen, kommen, nur nicht halten.' This could be seconded by Benjamin Constant, who praises 'une pièce sans action' and 'un dénouement sans exposition.' Next Madame de Staël could add her approbation of the drama which 'finit comme une conversation interrompue,' noting that 'il faut de l'art. . . pour trouver un dénoûment, car il y en a rarement dans la vie.' Shelley, not wishing to be outdone, could carry on the communal reply, stating that, in the 'prismatic and many-sided mirror' of the drama, there should be 'nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose.' Meanwhile, Manzoni could chime in, stipulating that 'un sommet d'incertitude ou de curiosité' must remain with the reader or spectator once the drama has ended.

While it is not our intention here to represent fully the development of closural theory after Romanticism, but merely, by means of several central examples, to indicate that the movement, unlaunched in the final years of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, more or less retraces the steps already taken by the romantic drama, two more typological 'echoes' lie in Strindberg and Shaw. The Swedish dramatist's 'Foreword' to *Frøken Julie*, for instance, propounds our sense of 'déjà entendu.' Strindberg's complaints about the critics who find his outcomes 'too sad' are reminiscent of similar attacks levelled by Tieck at Kleist, Hegel at Schiller, and a host of journalists at the French romantic drama.[11] Again, Strindberg's insistence that 'there is no such thing as absolute evil' recalls the outcomes of many romantic dramas, such as *Faust I*, *The Cenci*, and *Lorenzaccio*.

Strindberg continues:

> What will offend simple minds is that my plot is not simple, nor its point of view single. In real life an action--*this, by the way, is a somewhat new discovery*--is generally caused by a whole series of motives, more or less fundamental, but as a rule the spectator chooses just one of these. . . . But it is possible that the motive lay in all or none of these directions, or that the dead man [i.e. in the outcome] concealed his actual motive by revealing quite another, likely to reflect more to his glory. . . . I congratulate myself on this multiplicity of motives as being up-to-date, and if others have done the same thing before me, then I congratulate myself on not being alone in my 'paradoxes,' as all innovations are called.[12] (my emphasis)

A 'paradox' does indeed lie in the above formulations. The 'new discovery' of multiple motives in 'real life' has already, with Kleist's ambiguous presentation of the Kurfürst's actions in Prinz Friedrich von Homburg, achieved a great complexity; Hugo's Angelo, Tyran de Padoue and Musset's André del Sarto have, in their closural content, masked one motive with another, or suggested that both may be valid; while Marino Faliero, The Cenci, Lorenzaccio, On ne badine pas avec l'amour, and Dantons Tod have combined complexity of action and situation with a point of view that is far from 'single.' Musset, in particular, has revealed himself a master of the ending which, terse and equivocal, is left for the receiver to decipher.

The Realist and Naturalist dramatists that adopt the theory and structures of the non-ending do so, however, for reasons different from those of the Romantics. The emphasis is no longer on the fluctuating boundaries between reality and illusion and unity in multeity, but on the 'slice of life.' The 'real' world, later dramatists argue, produces no definitive outcomes. George Bernard Shaw is down-to-earth as he addresses the social conditions and mores of his age:

> The tradition of the catastrophe [is] unsuitable to modern studies of life: the tradition of an ending, happy or the reverse, is equally unworkable. The moment the dramatist gives up accidents and catastrophes, and takes 'slices of life' as his material, he finds himself committed to plays that have no ending. The curtain no longer comes down on a hero slain or married: it comes down when the audience has seen enough of the life presented to it to draw the moral. . ..[13]

Our brief sketch of closural theory from the early Realists to the Naturalists, closing with Shaw, has made no pretentions toward exhaustiveness. To extend the history of dramatic closure onward from

Romanticism is a tempting project, but outside the scope of the present work. What we have aimed at is an indication that the undoing of the ending, set afoot in the course of the Romantic era, does not stop short with the passing of the movement. That dramaturgists and dramatists such as Zola and Hauptmann did not, at least unconsciously, absorb certain elements of theory and practice from their immediate forebears is unlikely.

Throughout our study, the absence of twentieth-century critical studies of romantic closure has been a source of constant surprise. In particular, the evolution of methodologies, from Russian Formalism onward, which have made literary scholars more keenly aware of structures within the literary text, could conceiveably have drawn attention to this aspect of Romanticism. In general, however, the romantic drama remains a little-probed field, especially from a comparatist perspective.

Reference has been made above to the study of Manfred Pfister, which locates the genesis of the 'open ending' from Hauptmann onward. Similarly, Volker Klotz's set of core texts, from which his argument concerning 'open' and 'closed' form is drawn, is not widely comparative. Apart from a few texts by Racine and one by Tasso, the remaining eleven 'frequently cited' dramas in his listing are German. The Sturm und Drang is represented by Lenz, German 'Classicism' by Goethe and Schiller, and Büchner and Grabbe represent the remaining segment of the nineteenth century. Klotz concludes that, in the 'open' form of the drama, 'die äußere Handlung drängt über die Grenzen, die durch Angfang und Ende des Dramas gegeben sind, hinweg.'[14]

Das Geschehen setzt unvermittelt ein, und es bricht unvermittelt ab.'[15] Not only is the 'open-closed' distinction, in our view, arbitrary, but also the study is basically typological. Klotz suggests, in fact, that further study could be undertaken to determine the patterns of historical development.[16]

The lack of a truly comparative focus also impedes Peter Pütz's brief study of dramatic closure from achieving more than a highly general outline of traditional closure. The final words of Brecht's Der gute Mensch von Sezuan ('Wir stehen selbst enttäuscht und sehn betroffen / Den Vorhang zu und alle Fragen offen') serve as his one example of an 'open' ending.[17]

Somewhat more probing is the study of Pierre Larthomas, Le Langage dramatique. Here, however, only brief mention is made of romantic closure, and the sole examples are derived from French texts. Nevertheless, Larthomas astutely observes that, unlike the Racinian outcome, that of the Romantics cannot be omitted without depriving the drama of an essential element: 'La réplique finale souvent révèle à l'un des personnages ou souligne aux yeux des spectateurs, l'horreur de la situation. . . . À la limite, c'est le dernier mot qui donne à la pièce tout son sens.'[18] In Formalist terms, the curtain lines thus constitute bound motifs.

Referring to the structure we have, in the present study, called the 'circular ending,' Larthomas observes that this is 'une innovation du théâtre contemporain,' and cites La Cantatrice chauve by Ionesco as an example.[19] This statement merely proves that the designation 'first' is indeed dangerous.

## 2. Concluding assessments

In the introductory chapter, a question posed in Hölderlin's dramatic fragment, Der Tod des Empedokles, set the theme of our study: 'Wie wird das endigen?' Now, many dramas later, our study, in a parallel to what we have called the 'circular' ending, once more turns to address this question, now reformulated in the past tense: how has the romantic drama ended?

In another parallel to the closural structures posited in our examination, a vast collage of endings has ensued. These vary from the sensationalism of the final réplique of Dumas' Henri III et sa cour ('Bien! et maintenant que nous avons fini avec le valet, occupons-nous du maître,' OC I, p. 582) to the ironic 'Well, 'tis very well,' of Beatrice Cenci (V, iv, p. 334) to the shrill scream of Marion de Lorme to the rousing call to battle ('Ins Feld! . . . Zur Schlacht! . . . Zum Sieg!' [II, V, ii, p. 709]) in Prinz Friedrich von Homburg. On the surface, it would seem that few common denominators exist in such a variety of themes and moods. In particular, the sceptic would maintain that, in the enormous expanse of reading dramas like Brentano's Die Gründung Prags and Beddoes' macabre Death's Jest-Book, few links can exist with the closural structures, content and functions of Musset's On ne badine pas avec l'amour.

Nevertheless, our study has, it is hoped, established the typological unity in muleity of a previously overlooked aspect of Romanticism. The ending has, in our view, provided a point of access to the ethos of a major international movement and to a time of great dramatic innovation. Paradoxically, the 'exit door' of the stage and the final words of the printed text have served as an entrance to a period of experimentation.

Our chapters dealing with each of the three focal literatures in turn have followed a more or less chronological order. While the subdivision of our dramatic corpus into groups according to closural typology would have imposed a ready-made comparative synthesis, the decision to follow a loosely historical sequence was made for several reasons. Typological subdivision presents conclusions without at first sifting the indicators. To arrive at a classification after the structure and function of closure have been assessed offers, in our view, a more convincing method by which to proceed. Repeatedly, moreover, an overlapping of designations has emerged. For instance, the ending of Musset's On ne badine pas avec l'amour combines, according to our analysis, the climactic, ironic reversal, circular and tableau structures. Chronological subdivision also allows the distinctive patterns of development in each constituent literature to be traced and later contrasted and compared with the developmental patterns in the other groups.

In general, the closural practice of the German, English and French Romantics follows the age-old tendency of evolution, expansion, fixation, and gradual dissolution--followed, however, by a 'reincarnation' in the theory and practice of succeeding movements. The roots of the romantic ending have been, in our third and fourth chapters, traced back as far as to the possible 'ironic reversal' of Euripides' Orestes and to the similarly ironic 'exit motif' which accomplishes the breaking of illusion in selected baroque dramas. The most prolific signs of closural innovation before Romanticism proper occur, however, in the latter half of the eighteenth century with the sentimentalist and preromantic (in the German states, Sturm und Drang) movements. A growing relativism and awareness of unsatisfactory socio-political conditions evince themselves in the German Sturm und Drang and in a number of British and French dramas on the eve of the American and French revolutions. At the same time, and possibly as a partial consequence of socio-political disenchantment, the focus of the drama shrinks from the heroic and the national stage to the personal and the familial, often combined with less than heroic, or, as with Lenz's Die Soldaten, anti-heroic stances. The moralistic content of traditional closure and the restoration of communal harmony are either, as in the Sturm und Drang, undermined, or, as in sentimental-didactic closure, injected with strongly subjective elements.

Two developments on a theoretical level affect the structures and functions of closure: Diderot's concept of the tableau, with its implications of showing and suggesting rather than telling, and Lessing's exaltation of 'Mitleid,' or sympathetic identification. On the general level of dramatic form, the evolution of a 'median genre,' neither tragic nor comic, further inspires the undoing of cultural norms. To these innovative developments must be added the influx of popular modes and forms, such as the Gothic imagination and the rise of the melodrama. Our conjecture is, however, that climactic closure in the melodrama is probably inherited from romantic practice, while the pantomimic devices of the former may have contributed to the tableau ending of the romantic drama.

A general tendency to shake off prescriptive conventions of closure is evident throughout the pre-romantic era, and the rise of Shakespeare idolatry, particularly in German and English dramaturgy, aids the movement. With Lenz's *Die Soldaten* we find, in effect, an early instance of 'ironic reversal,' and with Klinger's *Die Zwillinge*, Wagner's *Die Kindsmörderin*, and Goethe's *Ur-Faust*, endings that are already climactic. The little-known British drama by Reynolds, *Werter*, serves as an isolated English example of climactic-tableau closure in the eighteenth century, and suggests that the content of *Sturm und Drang* works, with their highly explosive emotional colouring, and their theme of rebellion against social norms, have a profound influence on the structures of closure.

These examples are, however, scattered, and do not amount to a general tendency on an international scale. The definitive changes accompany Romanticism. Here again the German drama takes the lead. While 'transitional' endings, such as the implied cycle of unmitigated grief emerging from Schlegel's *Alarcos*, are still in evidence, other dramas reveal few lingerings of conventional practice. Tieck's *Der Abschied*, for example, is simultaneously illustrative of climactic, collage and tableau closure. With the same dramatist's *Genoveva*, we find an elaborate collage structure, where the ending evolves in a series of thematic parallels to the beginning. Later instances of this highly sophisticated structure, whil undermines the prevalent idea of the Romantics' lack of formal awareness, occur with Vigny's *La Maréchale d'Ancre* and Musset's *Lorenzaccio*.

Early British romantic closure is less free in undoing traditional structure and content. While theoretically Baillie's emphasis on the portrayal of complex character traits, and Wordsworth's insistence on feeling rather than event, suggest a departure from traditional dramatic form, the didactic influence of the Enlightenment yet lingers, along with overbearing echoes of Shakespearean closure. Although acting methods reveal very early a focus on character and emotion instead of on plot development, and the ending is made a grand culmination of complex and opposing forces within the hero, reconciliatory endings continue to figure in the stage texts. Nevertheless, closure in the first version of Wordsworth's Borderers yet includes a collage structure and partial circularity, in the sense that the initial unsatisfactory situation is not modified but rendered more despairing. The climactic elements of Coleridge's Osorio reveal, with the addition of a reconciliatory tableau, the impact of melodramatic structures several years before the term comes into general usage in England.

The chronological distance separating the French Romantic Movement from the German and the English correspondingly delays closural innovation. The post-revolutionary imposition of heroic, nationalist and pseudo-classical themes through the effects of Napoleonic censorship does not, nevertheless, entirely stifle signs of change, especially in the melodrama, where tableau, gesture, and undercurrents of self-mockery already pervade the ending.

A definitive counter-current to traditional French closure theory comes relatively early in the nineteenth century with Mme de Staël and Benjamin Constant. Surprisingly, the closural innovation that both writers recognize and more or less approve are still largely absent from their dramatic practice. In France, moreover, the traditional structures of closure are far more deeply entrenched than in the German states and England. For this reason, possibly, the contrast between old and new practice is more marked when innovation finally occurs, and is more the subject of discussion and conflict than elsewhere in Western Europe. Hence the central importance of the French movement as a 'test case' of the structures and functions advanced in the present study.

Of the three groups of our overview, the German Romantics reveal the greatest predominance of collage structures, partially explained by the philosophical bent and epic-lyrical expression of many of their dramatic experiments. In certain instances, such as in Brentano's vast epic-lyrical drama, Die Gründung Prags, the 'beginning of the ending' is formally and thematically difficult to determine. At the same time, it appears that the influence of popular theatrical forms such as the melodrama is less evident in German Romanticism than among the other two groups. A notable exception exists in the Schicksalsdrama, which, with the exception of Grillparzer's Die Ahnfrau, we have considered only marginally 'romantic,' and the sensational spectacles of Werner and Körner.

In all three component groups of our study, the ending can become a tool of 'ironic reversal,' in the sense of injecting the outcome with intratextual and intertextual criticism. As the German movement advances, the lighter modes of irony (e.g. in Tieck's Kunstmärchen 'comedies'), with their swivelling interplay of Scherz und Ernst, tend to become more destructive, taking on the dimensions of parody and satire, as in the works of Eichendorff, Raimund, and Nestroy. With Grabbe and Büchner, irony is converted into the grotesque. Concurrently, this development is also noticeable in the later phases of the English and the French romantic drama. Grotesque elements invade the work of Beddoes and Jerrold; in both *The Bride's Tragedy* and *Death's Jest-Book*, the closural content borders upon themes later to be taken up by the *Décadents* later in the century. A similar emphasis obliquely emerges from the pessimilstic but voluptuous outcome of Keats's *Otho the Great*. In the French movement, the melodrama every early begins to mock its own closure practice and the modes and fashionable stances of Romanticism, as in the stage adaptations of the ending of *L'Auberge des adrets* and later, in *Robert le diable*. The grotesque and moribund features of the ending also pervade the closural practice of Musset, who is a precocious 'exception' in the sense that his early work already reflects the transitions which the movement at large is later to undergo.

The especially close links of the French Romantics with the theatre promote, we have conjectured, a predominance of climactic closure unparallelled in the German and English drama. The melodrama, however, without its initial moralistic and reconciliatory elements, imparts itss sudden reversals and *coups de théâtre*. In the frenetic motion of the melodramatic-romantic ending, a penchant toward the dynamic and the power of sharp contrast and reversal is evident; these elements are concurrently present in romantic theory.

The closure of certain dramatists, such as Werner, Byron, Dumas and Hugo, begins in later years to reflect an evolution toward the stylized and the formalized. While the endings of Musset hover on a line of indeterminate silence and hold in suspension the questions of motive, reality and illusion, irony and sympathetic identification, others such as in Richard Darlington, Lucrèce Borgia, and Marie Tudor appear contrived or superimposed, as do those of Werner and the popular Schicksalstragödie of the German movement.

As Romanticism develops, the symbolic potential of the tableau is also exploited. While in Kleist's Käthchen von Homburg and the dramas of Werner it functions as a decorative device, in Byron's Marino Faliero, Musset's Lorenzaccio, and Büchner's Dantons Tod it becomes an eloquent structure of the ending which poises in suspension the conflicts and unresolved problems of the drama. Combined with the collage and climactic structures, the silent 'picture,' mobile or stationary, may take on the propelling power of the symbol, as when, for instance, the crowd surging toward the locked gates of the Ducal Palace in Marino Faliero is indirectly transmuted into a symbol for the people at large, excluded throughout history from the gates of power.

In all three literatures of our study, parallel tendencies are evident as the movement draws to a close. On the one side, ironic reversal may become more destructive and auto-critical; as argued above, grotesque and parodic elements may, as with the tableaux and ironic reversals of Eichendorff, Raimund, Nestroy, Grabbe, Büchner, Gautier, Musset and Beddoes,undo the very structure and content of the romantic ending. On the other, a gradual erosion of romantic structures, themes and motifs marks an international tendency toward what has, in German scholarship, been called the Biedermeier movement. The content and structures of the popular bourgeois drama--which has, throughout the Romantic movement, constituted the truly 'successful' work on the stage--re-emerge on the level of 'high' literature. Concurrently, the didacticism and represented tranquillity of the conventional, neo-Aristotelian ending again become more prominent.

The 'defeat' of the romantic structures and functions of closure is not, however, definitive. Generally speaking, the conventions of the ending, like those of dramatic form and content at large, have been freed from prescriptive norms. Although the ethos expressed in the outcome may change, the theory and structures of closure, introduced by the Romantics, persist in the modern drama. The romantic breakthrough provides an essential background in tracing the processes of creative 'borrowing' and destructive 'collision' that characterize literary tradition and innovation.

## NOTES

[1] George J. Becker, 'Introduction: Modern Realism as a Literary Movement,' in Documents of Modern Literary Realism, ed. G. J. Becker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 6.

[2] Vissarion Belinskij, 'On Realistic Poetry,' trans. L. Gordon, in Documents, p. 42 (first published in The Telescope, 1835).

[3] N.G. Cherniševskij, 'Life and Aesthetics,' (1853), trans. S.D. Kogan and G.J. Becker, in Documents, p. 52.

[4] Chernisevskij, p. 52, 55.

[5] Émile Zola, Le Naturalisme au théâtre, in Oeuvres complètes, notes and commentary by Maurice Le Blond, ed. Eugène Fasquelle (Paris: Bernouard, 1927), XXIX, p. 14. This edition will be used throughout for Zola, and identified according to volume number and page number in the text.

[6] Manfred Pfister, Das Drama. Theorie und Analyse, Uni Taschenbücher: Information und Synthese, 580 (München: Fink, 1977), p. 140. See also Volker Klotz, Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama (München: Hanser, 1960; rpt. 1969).

[7] Pfister, p. 141.

[8] Gerhart Hauptmann, 'Das Problem des dramatischen,' in 'Marginalien,' Sämtliche Werke, ed. Hans-Egon Hass, Centenar Ausgabe (Berlin: Propyläon, 1971), VI, p. 917.

[9] Hauptmann, VI, p. 918.

[10] Hauptmann, VI, p. 918.

[11] Strindberg, 'Author's Forword,' Miss Julie, trans. E. Spriggs, in Documents, p. 396.

[12] Strindberg, pp. 396-7.

[13] G.B. Shaw, 'Closure,' (Editor's heading) in O. Brownstein and D. Daubert, Analytical Sourcebook in Dramatic Theory (Westport: Greenwood, 1981), p. 57.

[14] Klotz, p. 219.

[15] Klotz, p. 219.

[16] Klotz, p. 225.

[17] Peter Pütz, Die Zeit im Drama: Zur Technik dramatischer Spannung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970), p. 229.

[18] Pierre Larthomas, Le Langage dramatique: sa nature, ses procédés, Nouvelle éd. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), p. 130.

[19] Larthomas, p. 130. Brief mention should be made of a recent collection of essays on closure which appeared unfortunately shortly after the present study had been completed. Le Point final, prés. Alain Montandon, Actes du Colloque International de Clermont-Ferrand, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines de l'Université de Clermont-Ferrand II, N.S., 20 (1984) will serve to fill in many of the gaps still existing in the study of the structures and functions of closure.

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